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# TESTIMONY

TO THE

DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, GOVERNMENT  
and DISCIPLINE of the CHURCH  
of SCOTLAND:

O R,  
REASONS by Mr. *Ebenezer Er-*  
*skine* Minister at *Stirling*, Mr. *William*  
*Wilson* Minister at *Perth*, Mr. *Alexan-*  
*der Moncrieff* Minister at *Abernethy*,  
and Mr. *James Fisher* Minister at *Kin-*  
*claven*, for their PROTESTATION  
entred before the Commission of the  
General Assembly, *November 1733*,  
upon the Intimation of a Sentence of  
the said Commission, loosing their Re-  
lation to their respective Parishes, &c.

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Jude, ver. 3. Contend earnestly for the Faith which was once  
delivered unto the Saints.

Rev. ii. 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, be-  
cause thou hast left thy first Love.

Ver. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and  
repent, and do the first Works; or else I will come unto thee  
quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place,  
except thou repent.

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EDINBURGH,

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A

# TESTIMONY

TO THE  
Doctrine, Worship, Government  
and Discipline of the Church of  
of Scotland, &c.

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## INTRODUCTION.

*Containing a short Narrative of the Proceedings of the several Judicatories against the four protesting Ministers.*



THE Commission of the General Assembly having, at their Meeting November last, pass'd a Sentence against Mr. Ebenezer Erskine Minister of the Gospel at Stirling, Mr. William Wilson Minister at Perth, Mr. Alexander Moncrieff Minister at Abernethy, and Mr. James Fisher Minister at Kinclaven, loosing their pastoral Relations to their respective Parishes, and declaring them no longer Ministers of this Church; It is thought needful, that, before the Grounds and Reasons of the Protestation, which they entred upon, the Intimating of the said Sen-

tence unto them, are laid open, the Reader should know how they came to be severally concerned in this Process. Therefore the following short *Narrative* of the Conduct of the Judicatories towards them, as also of the several Steps that they found themselves obliged to take, is offered by Way of *Introduction*, that the Reader may have a more distinct View of this Affair.

Mr. *Erskine* Minister at *Stirling* did, in a *Sermon* preached at *Perth* October 1732, at the Opening of the provincial *Synod* there, with some Freedom and Plainness of Speech, express himself against some of the Sins and prevailing Evils of the present Time; particularly against the *Act of Assembly* 1732, anent the settling of vacant Churches; and the Proceedings of our Church-judicatories, in the Settlement of Ministers over reclaiming and dissenting Congregations: But the Freedom and Faithfulness he used, was so disagreeable to some Ministers who heard him, that at the second Diet of the Synod they represented, That there were many Things delivered by Mr. *Erskine* in his Sermon which gave Offence; and at the same Time others declared, that they were not offended at any Thing they heard spoken, and that they heard nothing but sound and seasonable Doctrine delivered. Tho' the Brethren who heard the Sermon appeared to be of different Sentiments at the first Tabling of this Affair, yet the Matter was so far pushed, as a *Committee* was appointed to have the Particulars which were said to have given Offence under their Consideration, and to lay them before the Synod at their next Diet.

The *Committee* having laid before the *Synod* the Expressions in Mr. *Erskine's* Sermon alledged to be offensive, he was presented a Sight of them



in their Clerk's Hands; and even this small Favour he could not obtain, without a *Vote* of the Synod: And, having prepared some Answers, he read the same in open Synod, and delivered them to the Clerk.

The *Expressions* alledged to be emitted by Mr. *Erskine*, together with his *Answers* thereto, are to be found in the *True State of the Process*, published some Time ago, which contains likewise a just Account of the whole of the Synod's Proceedings, from an *Extract* under the Hands of the Clerk; and we refer the Reader unto it for his more particular Information in the whole of this Affair.

After *Three Days* were spent in *warm Reasonings* upon the Sermon, the Synod did, by a Plurality of *Six Voices*, find Mr. *Erskine* *cenfurable* for the Expressions contained in the Process, and which it was alledged were emitted by him in his Sermon at the Opening of the said Synod. *Twelve* Ministers, and *two* Ruling Elders *dissented* from, and *protested* against, this Sentence.

Mr. *Fisher* Minister at *Kinclaven*, Son-in-law to Mr. *Erskine*, being excluded from judging and voting in this Affair, because of his near Relation to the said Mr. *Erskine*, judged it his Duty to give *some Testimony* against a Sentence which he apprehended to be very unwarrantable: And, having no other Way left him for his own just Exonerati- on, did *protest* against the foresaid Sentence, *not only as prejudicial to Mr. Erskine, but as injuri- ous to the Truths of God's Word*; and *appealed* to the ensuing General Assembly. Mr. *Erskine* did likewise *protest* against the said Sentence, and *ap- pealed* to the next Assembly.

The Synod having found the *Expressions*, al-  
ledged



ledged to be omitted by Mr. *Erskine*, *cenfurable*, came next to confider what the *Cenfure* fhould be: And then, by another Vote, they refolved to rebuke Mr. *Erskine* at their Bar, and to admonifh him to behave orderly for the future. But Mr. *Erskine*, having appealed from their Sentence finding him cenfurable, came not again to the Synod at this Meeting.

When the Synod met at *Stirling*, *April* thereafter, Mr. *Erskine* was called; and when the *Moderator* was about to execute the Sentence of Rebuke and Admonition pafs'd at the laft Meeting of the Synod, he declared that he adhered to his Appeal; and, in a Paper which he read, reprefented that he was not convinced of any juft Ground he had given for a Rebuke and Admonition.

Thus this Affair came before the laft General Affembly; and when the Affembly entred upon it, none of the *Difsenters* from the Sentence of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* were prefent, but Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrieff*, who pled at the Affembly-Bar, that they might be heard upon the Reafons of their *Difsent* from the Sentence of their own Synod; this they judged to be their Right and Privilege: But the Affembly thought fit to refufe them a Hearing in the Caufe.

Mr. *Fifher* did likewise give in his Appeal in due Time to the Committee of Bills, who refufed to tranfmit the fame to the Affembly. Thus all thefe three Brethren were precluded from laying open their Reafons againft the condemnatory Sentence, at the Time when it was very proper and neceffary for them to have done it; as alfo from giving a Testimony in open Affembly, againft what they judged to be a moft unwarrantable Sentence: And therefore they lookt upon the Step which they after-



afterwards took, to be the more needful for their just Exoneration, and that both as they were *Ministers of the Church of Scotland*, and *Members of the Synod of Perth and Stirling*.

The Extract of the whole Process was read before the Assembly, and Parties were heard at the Bar; and then, after some Reasoning among themselves, the Assembly affirmed the Sentence of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, with this Addition, That tho' the Synod took no Notice of the Answers Mr. *Erskine* had given to their Charge, but had confined themselves to the Expressions as they had found them to have been emitted by Mr. *Erskine*; the Assembly thought fit to condemn his Answers likewise. Their Act and Sentence against him is in the following Terms :

At Edinburgh, May 15. 1733.

*The General Assembly having, at a former Diet, considered an Appeal entred by Mr. Ebenezer Erskine Minister at Stirling, from a Sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, wherein the said Synod had found Ground to censure him, and appointed him to be rebuked, on Account of several indecent Expressions uttered by him in a Sermon preached before the said Synod in October last, tending to disquiet the Peace of this Church, and impugning several Acts of Assembly, and Proceedings of the Church-Judicatories; and had appointed him to be admonished to behave orderly for the future.—The Assembly found these Expressions vented by Mr. Erskine, and contained in the Minutes of the foresaid Synod's Proceedings, with the Answers thereto made by him, to be offensive, and to tend to disturb the Peace and good Order of the Church: Therefore they approved the*

Pro-

Proceedings of the Synod, and appointed him to be rebuked and admonished by the Moderator at their own Bar, in order to terminate the Process; which was done accordingly.

When the above Sentence was intimate to Mr. Erskine, he declar'd he could not submit to a Rebuke and Admonition, in regard he was neither conscious to himself, nor judicially convicted, of transgressing the Bounds of his Ministerial Calling, or of uttering any Thing in his Sermon contrary to the Word of God, or the approven Standards of this Church; and then gave in the following signed Protestation:

*Altho' I have a very great and dutiful Regard to the Judicatories of this Church, to whom I own my Subjection in the Lord; yet, in respect the Assembly have found me censurable, and have tendered a Rebuke and Admonition to me, for Things I conceive agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Word of God, and our approven Standards; I find myself obliged to protest against the foresaid Censure, as importing that I have in my Doctrine, at the Opening of the Synod of Perth, October last, departed from the Word of God, and the foresaid Standards; and that I shall be at Liberty to preach the same Truths of God, and to testify against the same, or like Defections of this Church, upon all proper Occasions. And I do hereby adhere unto the Testimonies I have formerly emitted against the Act of Assembly 1732, whether in the Protest entred against it in open Assembly, or yet in my Synodical Sermon; craving this my Protest and Declaration to be insert in the Records of Assembly, and that I be allowed Extracts thereof.*

May 14th, 1733.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

The

The two dissenting Ministers from the Sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, judged it their Duty likewise to declare themselves against the above Decision of the Assembly: Their Reasons for doing so, are contained at large in the Representation they gave in to the Commission of the General Assembly that met in August thereafter, where they say, ' If this Cause had been Mr. Erskine's personal Cause, we should have been silent, and never opened our Mouths against the Decision of the General Assembly; but we judged it a Cause wherein all the Ministers and Members of this Church are very nearly concerned, the Decision of the General Assembly in this Case being, as we thought, a plain Directory to all the inferior Judicatories of this Church how to behave, if any Minister should, upon proper Occasions, lament from the Pulpit the Sinfulness of that Act of Assembly, (*viz.* the Act 1732 ) and of other unwarrantable Proceedings of this Church in the Settlement of Ministers; Then, and in this Case, they must be brought to the Bar of their respective Presbyteries, and there they must be rebuked and admonished.' For this, and other weighty Reasons contained in their said Representation, they signed an Adherence to Mr. Erskine's Protestation in the following Terms;

*We undersubscribing Ministers, Dissenters from the Sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, do hereby adhere to the above Protestation and Declaration, containing a Testimony against the Act of Assembly 1732, and asserting our Privilege and Duty to testify publicly against the same, or like Defections, upon all proper Occasions.*

WILLIAM WILSON.

ALEX<sup>r</sup>. MONCRIEFF.

B

Mr.



Mr. Fisher Minister at Kinclaven did, on the same very Grounds with his other two Brethren, sign the following *Adherence*;

*I Mr. James Fisher Minister at Kinclaven, Appellant against the Sentence of the Synod of Perth in this Question; altho' the Committee of Bills did not think fit to transmit my Reasons of Appeal, find myself obliged to adhere unto the fore-said Protestation and Declaration.*

JAMES FISHER.

After the above *Protestation*, with the *Adherence* thereto, was given in, the Brethren withdrew; and the Assembly, having taken the same under their Consideration, ordered the Four protesting Brethren to be cited to their next Diet, and appointed a Committee to consider the Paper they gave in, and their Conduct in this Affair, and to bring in by an Overture, what might be fit for the Assembly to do upon the Whole.

The Four Brethren having received a *Summons* by the Assembly's Officer, about Eleven of the Clock the same Night, to compear before the General Assembly at their Meeting Ten of the Clock next Day: And, having accordingly appeared before the Assembly, a Committee was appointed (without any Question put unto them) to retire immediately, and to endeavour to perswade them to withdraw their Paper and Protest; and they, having waited on the Assembly's Committee, laid before them some of their Reasons why they could not withdraw their Protestation. The Committee returned and made Report, *That the Four Brethren continued fully resolved to adhere to their Paper and Protest.* But none of the Reasons they offered unto the Committee were reported



ted to the General Assembly ; and, immediately upon the above Report made by the Committee, the Brethren were ordered to remove, and wait the Assembly's Judgment.

When the *Four Brethren* were removed, the Committee appointed at the preceeding Diet of the Assembly, offered their Overture upon the whole Affair ; which being read and considered, the *Assembly*, by a very great Majority, enacted and appointed as follows :

‘ The General Assembly ordains, That the  
 ‘ Four Brethren aforesaid appear before the Com-  
 ‘ mission in *August* next, and then show their Sor-  
 ‘ row for their Conduct and Misbehaviour, in of-  
 ‘ fering to protest, and in giving in to this Assem-  
 ‘ bly the Paper by them subscribed ; and that they  
 ‘ then retract the same. And, in case they do not  
 ‘ appear before the said Commission in *August*,  
 ‘ and then show their Sorrow, and retract, as said  
 ‘ is ; the Commission is hereby impowered and ap-  
 ‘ pointed to suspend the said Brethren, or such of  
 ‘ them as shall not obey, from the Exercise of their  
 ‘ Ministry. And further, in case the said Bre-  
 ‘ thren shall be suspended by the said Commission,  
 ‘ and that they shall act contrary to the said Sen-  
 ‘ tence of Suspension ; the Commission is hereby  
 ‘ impowered and appointed, at their Meeting  
 ‘ in *November*, or any subsequent Meeting, to pro-  
 ‘ ceed to a higher Censure against the said Four  
 ‘ Brethren, or such of them as shall continue to of-  
 ‘ fend by transgressing this Act. And the Gene-  
 ‘ ral Assembly do appoint the several Presbyteries,  
 ‘ of which the Brethren are Members, to report  
 ‘ to the Commission in *August*, and subsequent  
 ‘ Meetings of it, their Conduct and Behaviour  
 ‘ with respect to this Act.’

When this severe Sentence was pass'd, without ever hearing them in open Assembly upon the Relevancy of the Crime alledged against them to infer such a high Censure, they resolved, upon the Intimation of it, to read the following short Paper as their joint Speech; and, when they began to read it, the *Assembly's Officer* was called to take them to the Door, which obliged them to lay it down upon the Table with an Instrument: It is as follows;

*In regard the Venerable Assembly have come to a positive Sentence without hearing our Defences, and have appointed the Commission to execute their Sentence in August in case we do not retract what we have done, we cannot but complain of this uncommon Procedure, and declare that we are not at Liberty to take this Affair to an Avisandum.*

The Four protesting Brethren, being cited by the above Sentence to the Meeting of the Commission in August thereafter, compar'd accordingly; and having prepared their written Defences, according to their different Situations before the Assembly, as *Appellants* from, or *Protesters* against, the Sentence of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, they designed to give them in by Way of *Representation* unto the Commission: But the Commission, upon their Appearance at the Bar, entred upon a Resolve, neither to receive nor read any conjunct Paper that might be offered by the protesting Brethren; but that they should be obliged to give an Answer *separately*, and *viva voce*, if they were now willing, in Obedience to the last Assembly, to retract their Protestation, and to declare their Sorrow for their Conduct and Behaviour. This Resolve of the Commission obliged them to give in their several *Representations* with an Instrument. Both *Representations* are now published

blished to the World, and contain their Reasons for protesting against the Sentence of the last Assembly; as also their Reasons why they could not retract their Protestation, or declare their Sorrow for their Conduct and Behaviour.

Mr. *Erskine*, being first called, was interrogate according to the above Resolve of the Commission; to which he answered, *That he, with his other Brethren, had drawn up their Answers in Writ, which were now lying upon the Table; and craved that they might be read.* A considerable Time was spent in urging him to give an Answer to the Question about retracting his Protestation, and declaring his Sorrow for his Conduct and Behaviour: But he pled, That it was his just Right and Privilege to chuse which of the Ways he thought proper for his own Defence, whether to answer by *Word* or by *Writ*; and that he and his Brethren having agreed upon their joint written and subscribed Answers, he did not incline to give up with this his just Right and Privilege, and therefore he still referred to his written Answers. Mr. *Erskine* being removed, a *Vote* was stated about the reading of his Paper, and it carried in the Affirmative by a great Majority. Then he was called in, and allowed to read the *Representation* signed by him and Mr. *Fisher*; which he did accordingly, and laid it down again upon the Table: And, being desired to take it up, he refused, in regard it was given in with an Instrument, as necessary to be ingross'd in the *Process* for their Vindication.

Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrieff* being called, and interrogate as above, referred to their written and signed *Representation*, as containing their Answer to the Commission's Question, and which they craved might be read. But a Committee was appointed



pointed to meet with all the Four Brethren, who accordingly met with them, and endeavoured to perswade them to retract their Protestation: But the Reasons that were offered by the Committee did not convince them, and therefore it was reported to the Commission, That they still refused to retract their Protest, or to declare their Sorrow for the same. And the *Moderator* having enquired at Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrieff*, if they agreed to the Truth of the said Report; they answered in the Affirmative: Upon which, Advantage was taken to refuse a Reading to their written and signed *Representation*; and they were likewise desired to take it up, which they declined to do, because they likewise judged it necessary to be ingrossed in the *Process*.

Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrieff*, being allowed to make their Defences before the Commission *viva voce*, declared they could not retract their Protestation against the Decision of the last Assembly, nor profess their Sorrow for the same: And, having offered some Reasons for their Refusal, they referred, for other Reasons, to the *Representation* they had given in, and to which they still adhered; and then *protested*, ' That any Sentence of  
' Suspension, or of a higher Nature, that should  
' be inflicted upon them, should be held and re-  
' pute as *null and void* in itself; and that it should  
' be lawful and warrantable for them to exercise  
' their Ministry as hitherto they had done, and  
' as if no such Censure had been inflicted upon  
' them, in regard they were not convicted of de-  
' parting from any of the received Principles of  
' this Church, or of counteracting their Ordinati-  
' on Vows and Engagements; but, on the contra-  
' ry, were sentenced to Censure by the late Gene-  
' ral



ral Assembly, for protesting against a Decision whereby Injury was done to some Truths of God, which they were obliged to own and confess; and whereby they were brought under *new and unwarrantable Terms of Ministerial Communion*, inconsistent with the Word of God, and their Ordination Vows and Engagements; as their *Representation* more fully bears. To this *Protestation* Mr. *Erskine* and Mr. *Fisher* adhered.

There were *Petitions* and *Representations* given in to the Commission from the Presbyteries of *Stirling*, *Dumblain* and *Ellon*; as also from the *Magistrates and Town-Councils*, and from the *Kirk-sessions* of the Burghs of *Perth* and *Stirling*, craving a *Delay* of the Execution of the Assembly's Sentence against the *protesting Brethren*: But, by a *Vote* of the Commission, these several *Petitions* were *refused a Hearing*, because, as it was alleged, the Persons offering them were not proper Parties in the present Question; and, altho' a considerable Number in the Commission were for a *Delay*, yet the Majority judged the Sentence of the Assembly was *peremptory*, and therefore behoved to be obeyed. And when the *Vote* was stated, *Suspend the Four protesting Brethren from the Exercise of the Ministerial Function, and all the Parts thereof, or delay this Affair?* it carried, *Suspend*. From this Sentence, some *Ministers and Elders*, Members of the Commission, *dissented*. The Sentence of *Suspension* being intimate to the *Four Brethren*, they gave in the following *Protestation*:

*We hereby adhere to the Protestations taken by us before this Court, for ourselves, and in Name of all the Ministers, Elders, and Members of the Church of Scotland, and of all and every One in our respective Congregations, adhering to us,*

us; bearing, That this Sentence is in itself null and void; and that it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise our Ministry as hitherto we have done, and as if no such Censure had been inflicted: And that, if, in Consequence of this Sentence, any Minister or Probationer shall exercise any Part of our Pastoral Work, the same shall be held and reputed as a violent Intrusion upon our Ministerial Labours. And we do hereby protest for Extracts of the Papers given in by us, and of the whole of the Commission's Procedure against us; and hereupon we take Instruments.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

WILLIAM WILSON.

ALEX<sup>r</sup>. MONCRIEFF.

JAMES FISHER.

Likewise some Elders from the several Congregations concerned in the said Ministers reclaimed against the above Sentence; and, by their several Protestations, declared their Adherence to their Ministers, notwithstanding of the Sentence of Suspension inflicted upon them. Their Protestations are to be found in the True State of the Process, published sometime ago.

The Four Brethren, being cited to the Meeting of the Commission in November, compeared accordingly; and, when they were first called to the Commission's Bar, they offered to read the following Protestation; but, being interrupted, it was laid down upon the Table with an Instrument.

Edinburgh, November 14th 1733.

We do hereby protest, That our present Appearance before the Commission shall not be construed a falling from the Declarations we emitted, and the Protestations entred, both before and after the

*the executing of the Sentence of Suspension against us by the Commission at their Meeting in August last: To which Protestations and Representations, given in by us to the said Commission, we still adhere; and hereupon take Instruments.*

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

WILLIAM WILSON.

ALEX<sup>r</sup>. MONCRIEFF.

JAMES FISHER.

The Commission did at their first Diet, November 14th, appoint a Committee to commune with the Brethren, in order (as was said) to remove their Mistakes: They met with the Committee betwixt the Forenoon and Afternoon's Meeting of the Commission, who dealt with them to retract their Protestation; but no satisfying Arguments being offered them more as by former Committees of this Kind, they continued still to adhere to their Protestation. And the Committee reported at the Afternoon's Meeting of the Commission, That they had conferred with the Four Brethren, but without Success; and the said Brethren being called, were interrogate about their Obedience to the Sentence of the Commission in August last, suspending them from the Exercise of their Ministry; and every one of them plainly owned, That, as they had *protested*, both before and after the said Sentence of *Suspension* was execute upon them, *That it should be held and repuse null and void*, for the Reasons contained in their several Representations; so they had exercised all the Parts of their Ministerial Office, as if they had been under no such Censure.

Addresses, Representations, and Letters from several Synods and some Presbyteries, relative to the



the Commission's Proceedings in the Affair before them, were read; the Synods of *Drumfries*, *Murray*, *Ross*, *Angus* and *Mearns*, *Perth* and *Stirling*, craved the Commission might *delay* proceeding to a higher Censure; the Synods of *Galloway*, and *Fife*, and the Presbytery of *Dornock*, addressed the Commission for *Lenity*, *Tenderness* and *Forbearance* towards the Suspended Ministers; and the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* represented unto the Commission, 'That they judged the Sentence of Suspension, inflicted upon the fore-said Ministers, was too high, and that it was a stretching of Church-authority.' Likewise, many Members of the Commission did reason for a Delay, and pled, That the Act and Sentence of the last Assembly did not oblige them to proceed to a higher Censure at this Meeting of the Commission: And therefore the Question was put, *Proceed immediately to inflict a higher Censure upon the four suspended Ministers, or, delay the same till March?* And, the Votes being numbred, they were found equal on both Sides; whereupon Mr. John Goldie the Moderator did cast the Balance, by giving his Judgment to proceed immediately to a higher Censure. From this Sentence of the Commission several Ministers and Elders, Members of the Commission, *dissented*; and the following Declaration and Protestation was lodged with an Instrument in the Clerk's Hands, by the Ministers subscribing the same, and who were not Members of the Commission.

*Declaration and Protestation of some Ministers upon the Affair of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, &c. given in to the Commission of the General Assembly met at Edinburgh the 4th Day of November 1733.*



' We undersubscribing Ministers, Members of  
 ' the Church of *Scotland*, having formerly looked  
 ' upon the Affair relating to Mr. *Ebenezer Er-*  
 ' *skine* and his Adherents, that has been in De-  
 ' pendence before the Assembly and Commission,  
 ' as a Matter of vast Consequence and Concern  
 ' to all the Ministers and Members of this Church:  
 ' Tho' we had no Occasion regularly to sign the  
 ' same Papers with these Brethren, yet not only  
 ' did some of us, as well as others present at the  
 ' last General Assembly, openly and judicially ad-  
 ' here to the Protestation and Declaration given  
 ' in by them, as containing a Testimony against  
 ' the Act of Assembly 1732 anent planting vacant  
 ' Churches, and as asserting our Privilege and  
 ' Duty to testify publicly against the same or like  
 ' Defections on all proper Occasions; but also at  
 ' the last Commission, met in *August*, offered  
 ' our verbal Adherence, as several others did, un-  
 ' to the Protestation these Brethren entered against  
 ' the Sentence of the Commission, suspending them  
 ' from the Exercise of their Ministry: Whereby  
 ' we intended to testify our Concurrence with,  
 ' and Adherence unto, the several Representations  
 ' given in by them to the Commission under Form  
 ' of Instrument.

' Altho' we yet desire, so far as we can with a  
 ' safe Conscience, to maintain Communion with  
 ' this Church, and in a Way of Communion to  
 ' plead with our Mother; yet the Conduct of the  
 ' last General Assembly and Commission, and what  
 ' has followed thereupon, does more and more  
 ' open the melancholly Scene, and gives us special  
 ' Occasion to reflect with Grief upon the deep  
 ' Defection into which this Church has fallen,  
 ' and is likely further to fall, if the Lord in his

sovereign Mercy prevent not. And in particular, we cannot but think upon it, as both a sad Evidence of the Lord's having in a great Measure departed from this Church, and a Cause of his further departing from and contending against her, that her supreme Judicatory, and the Commission thereof, have been left, first to threaten us and several of our Brethren with high and severe Censures of this Church, for our essaying, according to our Measure, to bear Testimony for the Lord his Truths and Interests, and our refusing to submit to what appears from the Lord's Word, and our received Standards founded thereon, to be unlawful Impositions upon our Consciences; and then actually to lay four of our Brethren under a Sentence of Suspension from the Exercise of their Ministry, and continue to lay both them and us open to further Censure, yea, us in particular to the highest Censures of the Church (which evidently imports no less than the greater Excommunication) for nothing else than the above-named Grounds. And further, that they have not only gone into a Course of oppressing the Lord's Heritage, by violently thrusting in Men upon Congregations, without the Consent and contrary to the declared Will of the People; but also do materially excommunicate a great Body of sober, serious and religious People through the Land, who either will not tamely take the Yoke upon them, by submitting to the Ministry of those obtruded on them; or whose Consciences are so much offended with the violent Measures taken by Judicatories, that they cannot reap Benefit by the Ministry of those who have a direct Hand, or join in such Courses; and therefore do withdraw from their Ministry.

Upon

' Upon all which Accounts, and many others  
 ' that might be mentioned, as we would desire to  
 ' keep our Garments clean, and not be involved  
 ' in the Guilt of these and the like *Detections*,  
 ' and to be found upon the Lord's Side, and cleav-  
 ' ing to his Way in a declining Time, and acting  
 ' in a Suitableness to our general as well as parti-  
 ' cular Commission of Feeding Christ's Lambs;  
 ' We find ourselves obliged in this Manner to de-  
 ' clare our Adherence, likeas we hereby do ad-  
 ' here to the *Representations* given in by Mrs.  
 ' *Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alex-*  
 ' *ander Moncrieff* and *James Fisher* to last  
 ' Commission, and the *Protestations* then taken  
 ' by them, as they contain a Testimony against  
 ' the iniquous Sentence past against them, and  
 ' against the sinful Restrictions laid upon them  
 ' and other Ministers, from declaring fully the  
 ' Counsel of God upon proper Occasions. And  
 ' we do further protest, That it shall be lawful  
 ' and warrantable for us to hold Ministerial Com-  
 ' munion with these our Brethren, notwithstand-  
 ' ing any Sentence or Censure against them upon  
 ' this Process, as looking upon these Censures to  
 ' be without Warrant from, yea, contrary to the  
 ' Rule of the Lord's Word, and so done *clav-*  
 ' *errante*, and null and void in themselves. As  
 ' also, we protest, That it shall be warrantable  
 ' for us, in the Exercise of our Ministerial Office,  
 ' to use our best Endeavours in all lawful Ways  
 ' for the Relief of the oppressed Flock of Christ  
 ' in this Land, and their partaking of Church-  
 ' Privileges to their Edification and Comfort: And  
 ' that, whatever bad Effects may follow upon  
 ' the unwarrantable Measures at present taken by  
 ' *Judicatories*, we shall not be chargeable with  
 ' them.



• them: Upon all which we take Instruments.

RALPH ERSKINE.  
THOMAS MAIR.

At the next Diet of the Commission, November 15th, it was moved, That it should be marked in the Minutes, *That it carried only by the Moderator's casting Vote, to proceed to a higher Censure against the four suspended Ministers*: But this Motion was vigorously opposed by the Moderator himself, and some others; which gave Occasion to another Protest by some Members of the Commission.

At the Meeting of the Commission in the Afternoon, it was moved, That a Committee should be appointed once more to commune with the protesting Brethren, before the Commission should proceed to further Censure against them; and a Committee being named accordingly, they instantly retired, and met with the Brethren about Six of the Clock, and reasoned with them till about Ten at Night. Two different Proposals were made by the Reverend Committee; but, some Objections being made against the first of them, it was not insisted upon: The other Proposal, which the Brethren took under their Consideration, is as follows;

*If the next General Assembly shall declare, that it was not meant by the Act of the last Assembly to deny or take away the Privilege and Duty of Ministers to testify against Defections; Then we shall be at Liberty, and willing to withdraw our Protest against the said Act of Assembly: And particularly, we reserve to ourselves the Liberty of testifying against the Act of Assembly 1732 on all proper Occasions.*

When

When the above *Proposal* was made unto the four Brethren, as it was new unto them, they offered to retire for a short Time, and to return an Answer unto it; but the *Committee* desired them to take it for that Night under their Consideration, and said, They would obtain it of the Commission to delay the Affair till the next Day. The Brethren, in Compliance with the Committee's Desire, agreed to take it for that Night under their Consideration, with this express *Declaration*, That the Reason of their doing so, was, because it was late, and because they did not at that Time fully understand the Import of it. And the next Morning they made Answer in Writ to the Committee's Proposal, the Tenor whereof follows:

*As to the Proposal made by the Committee to us, that we should withdraw our Protestation, in case a subsequent Assembly should declare, that it was not meant, by the Act and Sentence of the last Assembly in Mr. Erskine's Affair, to deny or take away the Privilege and Duty of Ministers to testify against Defections. After serious and mature Deliberation, we have no Freedom to go in to the said Proposal, and that because the obvious Sense and Meaning of the said Act and Sentence appears to us to lay a Restraint on Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness, in testifying against the Act of Assembly 1732, and the like Defections in this Church, upon proper Occasions. And as this was the Ground of our Protestation, so any Declaration that a subsequent Assembly can make, cannot remove the Ground upon which we protested against that Decision; in regard that an Act and Declaration of the following Assembly, tho' agreeable to the Word of God, can never*

*never take away the Ground of protesting against a wrong Decision of a preceeding Assembly.*

The above *Proposal* has been represented as a very great *Condescension* made to the *four Brethren*, but their *Answer* declared plainly the Reason why they could not fall in with the same. *The protesting Brethren*, in their *Review* of the *Narrative* published by a Committee of the Commission; observe, ' That the *foresaid Proposal* was so far from being  
' any *Condescension* unto them, that it *still in-*  
' *sists upon the retracting of their Protestation* ;  
' and this they could by no Means yield unto,  
' because the Act of Assembly protested against,  
' in the plain obvious Sense and Meaning of the  
' Words in which it is framed, gave evident  
' Grounds for their said Protestation : And a De-  
' claration of an ensuing General Assembly, tho'  
' it were more particular than the Committee's  
' *Proposal* bears, would be so far from clearing  
' their Way to retract their Protestation, that it  
' would be a material Approving and Justifying of  
' the same.' Likewise they observe, in the *foresaid*  
*Paper*, ' That to depart in the least from a Testi-  
' mony that they had given, is very dangerous ;  
' especially at this Time, when the Current of  
' Defection and Backsliding is so violent and  
' strong.'

At the next Diet of the Commission, *November* 16th, the Committee reported, That they had met with the *four Brethren*, and that they have declared their Resolution to continue of the same Mind as formerly, and declined to go in to any *Proposal* offered unto their Consideration by the Committee. This Report being made, the Commission came to their *final Sentence* against the

*Four*



Four protesting Ministers, and it stands in their Minutes in the following Terms ;

*The Commission caused to be read the Act of the late General Assembly, also the Sentence of the Commission in August last, likewise the Resolve past in this Meeting of the Commission upon Wednesday last, relative to the said Four Ministers : And after full Reasoning, and mature Deliberation, and calling in the Brethren to join in Prayer for Light and Direction in this Affair : The Commission agreed upon the following Resolution of the Question : Loose the Relation of the said Four Ministers to their several Charges, and declare them no longer Ministers of this Church, and prohibite all Ministers of this Church to employ them in any Ministerial Function ; or depose them simpliciter ? And the Vote being put, Loose or Depose ? it carried Loose by a \* great Plurality. And therefore the Commission of the General Assembly did, and hereby do, loose the Relation of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine Minister at Stirling, Mr. William Wilson Minister at Perth, Mr. Alexander Moncrieff Minister at Abernethy, and Mr. James Fisher Minister at Kinclaven, to their said respective Charges ; and do declare them no longer Ministers of this Church ; and do hereby prohibite all Ministers of this Church to employ them, or any of them, in any Ministerial Function. And the Commission do declare the Churches of the said Mr. Erskine, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Moncrieff and Mr. Fisher, vacant from and after the Date of this Sentence ; and appoints that*

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\* N. B. It carried by a great Plurality, in regard a great many Members of the Commission had not Freedom to vote either Loose or Depose ; as is evident from the Moderator's casting the Balance in the former Vote.

*Letters from the Moderator, and Extracts of this Sentence, be sent to the several Presbyteries within whose Bounds the said Ministers have had their Charges, appointing them, as they are hereby appointed, to cause intimate this Sentence in the fore-said several Churches, now declared vacant, any Time betwixt and the first of January next; and also, that Notice of this Sentence be sent, by Letters from the Moderator of this Commission, to the Magistrates of Perth and Stirling, to the Sheriff-principal of Perth, and Bailie of the Regality of Abernethy.*

Upon the passing of the above Sentence, the following Protestation was given in by Mr. Gabriel Wilson Minister at Maxton, with the Adherence unto it.

*Edinburgh, November 16th 1733.*

*I Mr. Gabriel Wilson, Minister at Maxton, do hereby, in mine own Name, and in Name of all those that shall adhere to me, protest against this Sentence of the Commission in the Case of the Four Brethren; and that it may be lawful for me to complain of the said Sentence, and of the several Acts of Assembly that have occasion'd the same, to any subsequent Assembly of the Church of Scotland: As also, That it may be lawful for me, in a becoming Manner, on all proper Occasions, to bear Testimony against the same, with all other Defections and Severities of this Church in her Sentences. And finally, That I may in the mean Time, as in Providence I shall find Opportunity, hold Ministerial Communion with my said dear Brethren, as if no such Sentence had been past against them. Upon all which I take Instruments in the Clerk's Hands.*

*Gab. Wilson.*

*The*

( 27 )  
The above Protest is adhered to by us,  
Ralph Erskine *Minister at Dunfermline.*  
Thomas Mair *Minister at Orwell.*  
John Maclarine *Minister in Edinburgh.*  
Jo. Currie *Minister at Kinglassie.*  
Ja. Wardlaw *Minister at Dunfermline.*  
Tho. Nairn *Minister at Abbotshall.*

When the Four Brethren were called in, and the Sentence of the Commission was intimate unto them by the Moderator, they read the following *Protestation*; and, after reading it, they gave it in to the Clerk, with an Instrument taken thereupon by every one of them.

Edinburgh, November 16th 1733.

We do hereby adhere to the *Protestation* formerly entred before this Court, both at their last Meeting in August, and when we appeared first before this Meeting. And further, we do protest in our own Name, and in the Name of all and every one in our respective Congregations adhering to us, That, notwithstanding of this Sentence past against us, our pastoral Relation shall be held and reputed firm and valid. And likewise we do protest, That, notwithstanding of our being cast out from Ministerial Communion with the established Church of Scotland, we still hold Communion with all and every one who desire, with us, to adhere to the Principles of the True Presbyterian, covenanted Church of Scotland, in her Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline; and particularly with every one who are groaning under the Evils, and who are affected with the Grievances we have been complaining of; who are, in their several Spheres, wrestling against the same. But, in re-



gard the prevailing Party in this established Church, who have now cast us out from Ministerial Communion with them, are carrying on a Course of Defection from our reformed and covenanted Principles; and particularly are suppressing Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against the present Backslidings of the Church, and inflicting Censures upon Ministers for witnessing, by Protestations and otherwise, against the same; Therefore we do, for these and many other weighty Reasons to be laid open in due Time, protest, That we are obliged to make a Secession from them, and that we can have no Ministerial Communion with them, till they see their Sins and Mistakes, and amend them. And, in like Manner, we do protest, That it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise the Keys of Doctrine, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God, and Confession of Faith, and the Principles and Constitutions of the covenanted Church of Scotland, as if no such Censure had been past upon us: Upon all which we take Instruments. And we hereby appeal unto the first free, faithful and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

WILLIAM WILSON.

ALEX<sup>r</sup>. MONCRIEFF.

JAMES FISHER.

The above Protestation contains several Things, which must be set in a due Light, for the Satisfaction of such as are not prejudiced, and who are willing to receive Information. In the Bosom of it we promise to lay open in due Time the Reasons and

and Grounds of our Seceſſion from the prevailing Party in the Church, who are carrying on a Course of Deſection from our covenanted Reformation; This is the chief Deſign of what follows in this Paper: And therefore, after we have premised ſome historical Obſerves concerning the State and Condition of this Church both in her reforming and declining Periods; we ſhall lay open the Grounds of our Seceſſion from them whom we have deſigned the prevailing Party; and then we ſhall offer our Reaſons for the Validity of our paſtoral Relation to our reſpective Congregations, notwithſtanding of the above Sentence of the Commiſſion: As alſo, we ſhall prove the Warrantableneſs and Neceſſity of our exerciſing the Keys of Government and Diſcipline in our preſent Situation, according to the Word of God, our Confession of Faith, and the Principles of the covenanted Church of Scotland; and, for the Reader's Eaſe, theſe ſeveral Heads ſhall be diſtinguiſhed into ſo many different Sections.

## S E C T. I.

*Some Historical Obſerves on the State of the Church of Scotland, both in her reforming and declining Periods.*

THE History of this Church informs us, how God was graciously pleaſed to make the Light of the Everlaſting Goſpel very early to ſhine upon this Land: When our Fathers were bowing down before dumb Idols, and worſhipping the Hoſt of Heaven, the Day-ſpring from on High viſited us; either in the Apoſtolick Age, according to ſome; or in the Beginning of the next, according to others: And ſo powerful and prevalent

lent was the *Light of the Gospel*, that, about the Year 205, the *King* and many *Peers* of the Land embraced *Christianity*; and in a short Time thereafter the *whole Nation* became *Christian*, and was blessed of God, for several Generations, with Professors and Pastors eminent for Piety and Learning; until at last this Nation, with most of the Nations in *Europe*, was involved in *Popish Darknes*.

As God left not himself without *Witness* amongst us during that Period of Antichristian Darknes and Idolatry; so he was pleased again to clear our Sky, by the Ministry of Mr. *Patrick Hamilton*, Mr. *George Wisheart*, Mr. *John Knox* and others; insomuch, that, in the Year 1560, the *Reformation* was established, and our *first Confession of Faith* ratified, the *Covenant* three several Times sworn, before the Year 1597, for bearing down the *Throne of Iniquity* that opposed the Advancement of the *Kingdom of Christ* in the Land. At which Time the Lord was known in a remarkable Manner in the Assemblies and *Dwelling-places* of our *Zion*; and upon all the *Glory* there was a *Defence*: The *Doctrine* being sound and lively, the *Worship* pure and spiritual, the *Discipline* powerful and impartial, the Government *beautiful as Tirzah*, and comely as *Jerusalem* for Order and Unity, and all accompanied with the rich Breathings and Influences of the Spirit of the Lord; so that, in this Period, the *Church of Scotland* was spoken of among *Foreigners*, as one of the brightest *Candlesticks* among the Churches of *Christ*.

When after this the *Powers of Hell* and *Earth* had so far prevailed, as to introduce a Course of *Defection* for about the Space of 40 Years, wherein Error, Superstition and *Prelatick Tyranny* prevailed; it pleased God, in the Year 1637, to stir



up the Spirits of a few of his *faithful Witnesses*, and so far to own them by his powerful Providence, that in the Year 1638, notwithstanding of the utmost Effort of the *Gates of Hell*, almost the whole Land, in a few Months, subjected themselves to the *Oath of God* for Reformation; which was countenanced from Heaven with a more than ordinary Display of the Divine Presence, and Down-pouring of the Spirit from on high on Judicatories, & on the Assemblies of his People for Worship, in so much that *in his Temple every one did speak of his Glory*. How did the Church of Christ, in this Return of the *Sun of Righteousness*, look forth as the *Morning*, fair as the *Moon*, clear as the *Sun*, and terrible as an *Army with Banners*? With what Life, Zeal and Courage did Judicatories go to Work, (notwithstanding of very great Opposition) reviving and approving the *Registers* and *Acts* of former free and lawful Assemblies, condemning and annulling *Six pretended Assemblies*, which had transgressed the Laws of Christ, changed the Ordinances of his House, and broken the *everlasting Covenant*? The unlawful *Oaths* imposed upon Intrants in Times of Defection, the *Service-book*, the *Book of Canons*, the *Book of Ordination* and *high Commission*, were all condemned; *Prelacy* and the *Five Articles of Perth* abjured; and the *Prelates* deposed and excommunicate; all Monuments of Popish Idolatry and Prelatick Tyranny and Superstition abolished. Then was the Government of the Church set upon its proper Basis, the *Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles*, Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone; And, by the good Hand of God upon his Servants at that Time, the *Reformation* was advanced and carried on, and at last ratified and confirmed by

by *King and Parliament* in the Year 1641. Under this Period, viz. from 1638 to 1650, *Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies* were established in their full Power and Privilege; Laws both Civil and Ecclesiastick were enacted, not only for purging the House of God, but for preserving Judicatories Civil and Ecclesiastick free of Corruption; *Patronages* were repealed, and the *Settlement of Ministers* was appointed to be *with the Call and Consent of the Congregation concerned*; likewise the Rights of the Church of Christ in this Land were asserted and recognized by the *National Covenant*, sworn by all Ranks of Persons.

The remarkable Countenance that the Lord gave at this Time to the reforming and covenanting Church of *Scotland* (if we may allude to the Practice of *Judah and Israel*, Jer. l. 5.) did excite our Neighbours in *England and Ireland* to say, *Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in an Everlasting Covenant never to be forgotten.* Accordingly, in the Year 1643, the *Solemn League and Covenant* was sworn, for maintaining, and for advancing and carrying on a Work of Reformation in all the three Lands: This *Covenant* was afterwards renewed in *Scotland*, with a *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins*, and *Engagement to Duties*, in the Year 1648.

The Lord having performed his great Work in *Mount Zion*, He did reign among his *Antients gloriously*; till, through the Influence of a Party disaffected to the Work of Reformation, a Gap was opened by the *publick Resolutions*, for Men of Malignant Spirits to get in to Places of publick Trust Civil and Military, and by this Means also to wind themselves into Ecclesiastical Judicatories.

Against

Against this Step of Defection, a considerable Body of eminent Ministers, and judicious Elders and Professors, have transmitted a *faithful Testimony* to us their Posterity. And the disaffected Party having, by the foresaid *publick Resolutions*, got themselves into Places of Power and Trust, a Foundation was thereby laid for innumerable Evils which brake in like a Flood, and sullied that glorious Work of Reformation; and the Lord was provoked, in a Way of righteous Judgment, to let loose the Malignant Spirit, and to put such Power in their Hands, as to cast this Church into a hot Furnace of *Persecution* for the Space of Twenty eight Years; from which he again delivered us by his glorious and surprizing Appearance for us at the *Revolution*, whereof the *Prince of Orange*, afterward proclaimed *King*, was the happy Instrument.

When God did again break the *Yoke of Prelatick Tyranny* and *arbitrary Power* from off our Necks, and allow us, under the Protection of Authority, to meet in a National *Assembly*; it might have been expected, that the *glorious Work of Reformation*, attained to in the former Period, from 1638 to 1650, should have been *recognized*; especially considering, that many Ministers and others, who had *seen the Temple in its former Glory*, were yet alive. We do not here intend to detract from that Regard that is due to the Memory of these worthy Ministers, and others, who came out of the Furnace of a hot Persecution, and did bear a Part in our first General Assemblies after the Revolution; They no doubt did what they thought proper and seasonable to be done in their present Situation: Yet we cannot conceal, yea, we must in Duty to the present, as well as succeeding Generations,



rations, mention some considerable *Omissions*, of which both Ministers and others have complained, and which we cannot but look upon as *standing Grounds* of the *Lord's Controversy* against us, and as one of the Causes and Springs of many Evils that have since befallen us: As for Instance, Besides what is already observed, That the Work of Reformation, attained to in the former Period, was never recognized by any of our General Assemblies since the Revolution; We must add, That altho', in the *Causes* of the *National Fast* appointed by the Assembly that met 1690, it is owned, 'That the Supremacy was advanced in the preceding Reigns in such a Way, and to such a Height, as never any Christian Church acknowledged;' Yet that unwarrantable *Supremacy*, usurped by the Powers of the Earth over the House of God, was not *absolutely* condemned, and the Sovereignty and Headship of Christ in his own Church was never asserted *expressly* by any *particular Act*, in *Opposition* to the bold Encroachments made thereupon in the late Times of lamentable Defection and grievous Persecution: And particularly, these sinful and self-contradictory *Oaths*, viz. the *Oath of Supremacy*, and that called the *Test*, whereby Christ was sacrilegiously robbed of his Royal Crown and Dignity, and the whole Land involved in the dreadful Sin and Guilt of Perjury, were never *expressly* and *particularly* condemned and mourned over; neither have these, and several other *sinful Oaths* imposed during the foresaid Period, nor the Subversion of our *covenanted Reformation* by *Parliamentary Deeds*, which laid a Foundation for the Tyranny and Blood-shed which followed thereupon, been *particularly acknowledged* in any of our *Acts* appointing

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*Natinal Fasting* since the *Revolution*. The *Obligation* of our *Covenants National and Solemn League*, and *their binding Force upon Posterity*, has never been *expresly* asserted by any *particular Act* of our *Assemblies*; tho' this was the more necessary, considering how they were so *openly violate*, and ignominiously *burnt* in the former Period. Likewise the faithful *Testimonies* of many of the Lord's Servants and People, even unto Death, for the Headship of Christ and our *Covenants National and Solemn League*, have not been *particularly* justified and approven. And so far were we from purging the House of God, according to the Example of the preceeding reforming Period, that a Number who had complied with *Prelacy*, and who had been involved in the *Blood-shed* and *Perjury* of the late persecuting Times, were received into Ministerial Communion with this Church, and had Place in her *Judicatories*, without requiring any Evidence of their Repentance, and *Sorrow* for their hainous Guilt. When these and the like Evils are seriously considered, have we not Reason to say, *We with our Fathers have sinned, we understood not his Wonders, nor remembered the Multitude of his Mercies?* And tho' he saved us for his Name's Sake, that he might make his mighty Power to be known; yet, have we not mingled ourselves with the *Enemies* of a covenanted Reformation, and *learned of them their Works?*

It was alledged, That the Land was then no way *ripe* to return by solemn national Covenanting unto the Lord; and that it was not a *proper Time and Season* to be too *particular* in mentioning our publick national Sins, and in condemning the gross Defections and hainous Backslidings of the former Period, or in justifying the *Wrestlings* and *Contendings* for

the covenanted Testimony of the Church of Scotland, unto Imprisonments, Banishments, spoiling of Goods, cruel Tortures, and even unto Death itself; and that by a great Cloud of Witnesses, from the Noble Marquis of Argyle down to the late wonderful Revolution. But, in waiting for a proper Time and Season, we came to lose the Season and Opportunity altogether; particularly when by the Treaty of Union, Anno 1707, we were brought under the more immediate Influence of our Neighbours, whose Principles as to Church Government and Discipline, and in many Points that concern the Worship of God, do differ widely from ours; as also, when by the said Treaty we were incorporate with them, upon Terms opposite unto that Covenant-Union, which was reckoned the Honour and Glory of the three Lands in a former Period. Hence, instead of making Progress in a Work of Reformation, we came in a short Time to fall under the Weight of some new and very heavy Grievances: As for Instance,

In the Year 1712, the Right of Presentation to Patrons, subversive of the Right of Election belonging to Christian Congregations, by the Word of God, and the Constitutions of this Church, was restored; and an almost boundless Toleration was granted, by which the Government and Discipline of this Church was greatly weakened, and a Door was opened for Laxness in Principle, which never fails to bring alongst with it Looseness in Practice; Superstition and Will-worship have thereby spread further through the Land, than in any Period since our Reformation: A Wound was also given, and a Breach made amongst the Ministry of this Church, which is not to this Day heal'd, when, by the foresaid Act

of



of *Toleration*, the *Oath of Abjuration* was impos'd. The most Part of the Ministers of this Church, apprehending it brought them under no other Obligation but Allegiance to the *Sovereign*, and an Engagement against a *Popish Pretender*, and to the Succession in the Protestant Line, had Freedom to take the said Oath; when several Ministers, judging it did homologate the united Constitution, opposite to our *Covenant-union*, tho' they were equally well-affected to the Protestant Succession with their Brethren, yet for this, and other Reasons of this Kind, they have not to this Day had Freedom to swear it. Likewise the *Sacramental Test*, and Conformity to the *Hierarchy*, *Liturgy* and *Ceremonies* of the Church of England, came to affect such as are Members of this Church while serving the *Sovereign* in *England* and *Ireland*. Countenance is also given to a superstitious Observation of *Holy-Days*, by the *Vacation* of our most considerable Civil Courts, in the latter End of *December*: Likewise, a superstitious Form of *Swearing* is introduced amongst us from *England*, by laying the *Hand* upon, and kissing the *Gospels*; a very gross Innovation in that solemn Piece of Divine Worship, and contrary to the Scripture-Pattern: And the Judicatories of this Church, and Members thereof, are precluded from addressing the Honourable *House of Peers*, unless Addresses are directed unto the *Lords Spiritual*, which is not agreeable to our known Principles. All these Things, together with the more frequent Resort of Persons of all Ranks into *England*, and their occasional Conformity to the *Liturgy* and *Ceremonies* there, have very much blunted that Edge and Concern, manifested in former Times by this Church and Land, for the Purity

Purity of Divine Institutions; and they cannot fail in Proceſs of Time (if the Lord do not mercifully prevent it) to make this and the riſing Generation more and more eaſy and indifferent about the Worſhip, Government and Diſcipline of the Lord's Houſe. Thus our ſpiritual Beauty is daily departing from us, our Gold becomes dim, and our moſt fine Gold is changed: *The Crown is fallen from off our Heads, 'wo unto us, for we have ſinned.*

When thick and dark Clouds were covering our *Horizon*, and when Ruin and Deſtruction threatned any good Work that the Lord had wrought for us by the late merciful *Revolution*, the Lord was graciously pleaſed to ſcatter the Clouds, and to revive our Spirits, by the ſeaſonable Acceſſion of our late Sovereign King George to the Throne of theſe Realms: And no ſooner was this Deliverance given us, than an *unnatural Rebellion* broke forth in our Bowels; the Intereſt of a *Papiſt Pretender* was openly eſpouſed, and a Banner was diſplayed againſt the *Revolution-intereſt*, our Sovereign King George, and the *Proteſtant Succeſſion* in his *Royal Family*, and that by a Set of Men who were always declared Enemies to *Scotland's covenanted Reformation*: But the Lord was graciously pleaſed to break their Meaſures, to pour Shame and Contempt upon our Enemies, and to turn *War into Peace* in all our Borders.

When the Hand of the Lord was ſo remarkably ſeen in working manifold Deliverances for us, it might have been expected that ſomething ſhould have been done for carrying on Reformation-work amongſt us, and that the proper Means ſhould have been uſed for the Redreſs of theſe Grievan-

Grievances that we were groaning under : But tho' several *Synods* and *Presbyteries* (especially after *King George I.* his Accession to the Throne) did by their *Instructions* often desire, that the *General Assemblies* of this Church might address his Majesty for the Redress of the Grievances that we were brought under ; and tho' we had Reason to expect Success in Addreses of this Nature, when 'tis considered that the *Toleration* and *Patronage* Acts were brought upon us at a Time when the *Protestant Succession* was in the greatest Danger, and with an evident Design to strengthen the *Episcopal* Party, the known Favourers of the *Pretender*, and to weaken the Hands of the *Presbyterians*, the only firm Friends to the *Protestant Succession* in *Scotland* ; yet this has been neglected from Time to Time, to the very great Prejudice of this Church ; but, instead of using proper Means for obtaining a Redress of our Grievances, we have, like *Issachar*, couched down between two Burdens, and bowed our Shoulder to bear.

Further, as if we had been delivered to add Iniquity to our former Trespases, *Corruption* in Principle and Practice has never more abounded in the Land, so far as we know, as since our Deliverance from the late unnatural Rebellion ; and it is to be feared, that too many are tainted with the damnable and pernicious Principles of a *Sett of Men*, who have lately employed their Tongues and Pen to run down revealed Religion, and to raze the Grounds and Foundation of our Christian Faith : It is evident, that *Arian* Blasphemies, and *Arminian* Errors, have been vented in one of our most considerable *Seminaries* of Learning, where the Youth are trained up for the Holy Ministry



nistry ; *Conversion* and *Regeneration* are ridicul'd by many ; serious Godliness, and the supernatural Work of the Spirit of God upon the Souls of Men in their effectual Calling, have been treated even from the *Prest* and otherwise in a very ludicrous Manner ; the Power of Religion is daily decaying amongst us ; the very Form of it is despised by some, and rested upon by others. These *Nurseries* of Prophanity, Wickedness and Wantonness, viz. the Diversions of the *Stage*, *Night-Assemblies* and *Balls*, have prevail'd in the *principal City* of the Nation, and elsewhere ; the common Impressions of God are in a great Measure worn off the Spirits of Men, and the Holy Spirit of God is very much restrained both from our Assemblies for Worship and Discipline. We are consumed, and yet we know it not : Tho' the *Ministers* of the *Sanctuary* ought to *sanctify a Fast*, and *call a solemn Assembly*, especially when Iniquity abounds ; yet *National Fasting* has been laid aside for several Years, as if we are altogether innocent, tho' the Necessity of it has been represented from Year to Year, to our National Assemblies.

But to all the above-mentioned Evils we must add, That Ruin threatens the Church of *Scotland*, from the *Want of due Caution and Tenderneſs* in the *licenciating of young Men* as Probationers for the holy Ministry, as also from the Corrupt and undue *Entries* of many into the Ministry, particularly by the *Acceptance of Presentations* : This Course has a visible Tendency to increase, in all Corners of the Land, a *Ministry* utterly *unacceptable*, and so not fit to *edify and rule the Flock of God*, and to strengthen the Hands of our Enemies, who may design to model the Church accord-

according to their own Mind; and this Ruin is wholly from *ourselves*, the Blame of it must be laid at our *own Door*; especially when it is considered, that the *Parliament*, in the Year 1719, inserted a Clause into the Patronage-Act, which might have been improven for Good to the Church of *Scotland*: For, as it was declared by the said Act, *That a Presentation was not valid unless accepted*; so it was then thought, that none who owned themselves *Presbyterian*, would follow this Course; and consequently it was judged, that the Settlement of Parishes would have run in a more agreeable Chancel than formerly: And for some Time the Acceptance of a Presentation was not so much as heard of amongst us, till *some*, whose Station and Character laid them under the strongest Obligations to assert and maintain the Liberties and just Rights and Privileges of the Church of *Scotland*, did *sinfully and shamefully lead the Way* for a *conditional Acceptance of Presentations*. And, when this was not check'd in the Bud, it soon became fashionable for Intrants into the Ministry to follow this Course; and herein they were supported by the Decisions of the Commission of the General Assembly in their Favours, appointing their Settlement in Parishes, when *most Part* both of *Elders* and *People* were *reclaiming*. Yea, Settlements have been appointed in a very *arbitrary* Manner over *dissenting Congregations*, even when there was no *Presentation* in the Case; and, when the Presbyteries concerned could not proceed to such violent Settlements, *Committees* of the *Commission* were named, and invested with a *Presbyterial Power*, to try and ordain Men to the Office of the Holy Ministry: And, if *Presbyteries* refused to *inroll*

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them after they were ordained, or if Ministers dispensed *sealing Ordinances* to the People of these Congregations, who cannot submit to the Ministry of such as are intruded upon them, in both these Cases the *highest Censures* of the Church are threatened to be inflicted.

And, that our Ruin may be more effectually carried on, the *General Assembly* did by their *Act 1732*, anent the *Settlement of vacant Churches*, lay a *Toke* upon the Neck of the Church and People of God, *heavier*, in some Respect, than that of the *Patronage-Act* itself; but, since this will bear a Part in the following *Section*, we shall not insist upon it here.

By Reason of the above-mentioned Proceedings of our Church-judicatories, the Cry of Violence and Oppression is still louder and louder from all Corners of the Land : And, as if all these Evils were not enough, if *Ministers from the Pulpit* regret them, if they expose the Sinfulness of them, and the Danger that they threaten our Presbyterian Constitution, they must be brought to the Bar of Church-judicatories, and there be *rebuked* and *admonished* : Tho' the Danger is evidently seen, yet the *Watchmen* upon our *Jerusalem's Walls* must be *silent* ; they must hold their Peace, and not give the Alarm to the *City of God*. This is the Case of Mr. *Erskine*, who was appointed by the *last Assembly* to be *rebuked* and *admonished* at their Bar, for *testifying*, in his *Sermon* at the Opening of the Synod of *Perth*, against the *foresaid Act of Assembly* as sinful, and against the *unwarrantable Proceedings* of our Church-judicatories in the *Settlement of Ministers* ; and this *Sentence* of the *Assembly* gave Occasion for the *Protestation* mentioned in the preceding

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*Introduction*, and which was *resented* by the *Assembly* in the Manner that is there narrated.

We shall only add, That such is the State and Condition at present of what is reckoned the *Established Church of Scotland*, that there is no outward Appearance of any Change and Alteration in her Circumstances to the better ; especially when it is considered, that the Judicatories, particularly the General Assemblies and their Commissions, are filled with such as have been either *intruded* into Congregations themselves, or who are the avowed and declared *Supporters* and *Abettors* of *violent Intrusions* : And what can be expected from such who are thrust in upon Congregations, but that they will to the utmost of their Power *promote* the same *Course*, and *bear down* whatever Opposition is made by *Doctrinal* or *judicial Testimonies* against the same ?

This is a short Hint at the present deplorable Situation of the Church of *Scotland*, once famous amongst the Churches for Purity, comely for Order and Unity, and beautiful through some Measure of the Divine Presence in her Judicatories and Assemblies for Worship : But her Beauty is in a great Measure departed from her, she is losing her Purity, and destroying her own comely Order and Unity ; so that, in many Respects, *Jehabod* may be said to be written upon her. And this will further appear from the *Grounds* of our present *Secession* from the *prevailing Party* in the *Established Church*, who are carrying on with a high Hand a Course of Defection from our Reformation and covenanted Principles ; and these we are to lay open in the following *Section*.

## S E C T. II.

*Reasons by the Protesting Ministers for  
their Secession from the prevailing  
Party in the established Church.*

**T**HE Commission of the General Assembly, by the Sentence that they have pass'd against us, declare us to be no longer Ministers of this Church, and they prohibite all the Ministers of this Church to employ us in any ministerial Function. This Sentence of the Commission carries not in it any one Ground for such a singular and uncommon Censure; but, as it stands in Connection with the Act and Sentence of the last General Assembly against us, it is because we protested for our just Right and Privilege to testify against the Act 1732, and the like Defections of this Church. And being suspended from the Exercise of our Ministry, because we could not retract the said Protestation, and declare our Grief and Sorrow for the same; Yet, notwithstanding of this, we continue to exercise our Ministry, as we have already narrated in the preceeding Introduction: Therefore the Commission did proceed to the above Sentence against us; and, when it was intimated unto us, we did protest, that, Notwithstanding of our being cast out from ministerial Communion with the established Church of Scotland, we still hold Communion with all and every one, who desire with us to adhere to the Principles of the true Presbyterian covenanted Church of Scotland, in her Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline; and particularly with every one, who are groaning under the Evils, and affected with

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the Grievances we have been complaining of, and who are in their several Spheres wrestling against the same. But, in regard the prevailing Party in this established Church, who have now cast us out from ministerial Communion with them, are carrying on a Course of Defection from our reformed and covenanted Principles, and particularly are suppressing ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against the present Backslidings of this Church, and inflicting Censures upon Ministers for witnessing by Protestation and otherwise against the same: Therefore we do, for these and many other weighty Reasons to be laid open in due Time, protest, That we are obliged to make a Secession from them; and that we can have no ministerial Communion with them, till they see their Sins and Mistakes, and amend them.

We own that Secession from ministerial Communion with such as bear the Character and Office of Ministers of the Gospel, ought to proceed upon weighty and important Grounds; yet, as it cannot be refused that a Secession from ministerial Communion with such has been found in some Cases both necessary and justifiable, so we hope it will be evident to such as consider the Matter without Partiality and Prejudice, that our present Secession is both warrantable and necessary: Our Protestation doth limit and circumscribe the same, and it plainly characterizeth them from whom it is made. Our Secession is not from the Church of Scotland; we own her Doctrine contained in her Confession of Faith; we adhere to her covenanted Presbyterian Church-Government, Discipline and Worship: Neither is our Secession from these who are cleaving unto our covenanted Principles, and who are affected with the



the Grievances we complain of, and are in their several Spheres wrestling against the same ; but it is from a Party who have got the *Management* in their Hands, and who have got the *Majority* on their Side in the *Judicatories*, particularly in our *Assemblies* and *Commissions*, and who are *carrying on a Course of Defection* from our reformed and covenanted Principles, and are *suppressing ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness* in testifying against their present Backslidings, by *inflicting Censures* upon Ministers for witnessing by Protestation and otherwise against the same.

And that we may more fully and plainly declare ourselves upon this Head, and satisfy such as are unprejudiced, about the Necessity and Unwarrantableness of our present Conduct ; we do affirm, That the *prevailing Party* in the *Judicatories* of the Church of *Scotland*, particularly in our *Assemblies* and *Commissions*, are *breaking down* our beautiful Presbyterian Constitution, and *pursuing such Measures as actually corrupt*, or have the most *direct Tendency to corrupt*, the Doctrine contained in our excellent *Confession of Faith* ; and that they are *imposing new Terms of Ministerial Communion*, by restraining Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against these sinful and Church-ruining Courses ; and all this *contrary to the Solemn Engagements* they have come under at their Ordination to the holy Ministry. And likewise, these corrupt Courses are *carried on with a high Hand*, notwithstanding that the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them, and to stop the Current of their Defection, till at length Matters are come to such a Height, that we are excluded from keeping up a standing Testimony against their Defection and Backsliding in a Way of Ministerial

sterial Communion with them : And therefore it is not only *necessary* for us, but *present Duty*, to make a *Secession* from the said *prevailing Party*, till they see the Sins they are guilty of, and the Mistakes that they are under, and reform and amend the same.

The *Charge* that we have now laid against the *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of the established Church of *Scotland*, we own, is very *heavy* ; and, as we are heartily sorry that we should have so much Ground for it, so we can say, that we sincerely wish Matters were otherwise. It is not very pleasant unto us, that we are obliged to lay open the sinful and unwarrantable Steps of such, who profess to be of the same Presbyterian Denomination with ourselves, and to own the same *Confession of Faith* with us : But since the Measures that are followed at present are so opposite unto our professed and declared Principles, and since the *Party* from whom we have made a *Secession* are going on in the said Measures without relenting, and since the whole of their unjustifiable Conduct towards us appears to be a loud and clear Call in Providence unto us ; Therefore, for these Reasons, we judge it our Duty to exoner ourselves after this Manner before the World, and to bear *Testimony* before the present, as well as for the Sake of succeeding Generations, against a Course of Defection and Backsliding from our covenanted Reformation.

We shall now proceed to *prove* the several *Parts* of the above *Charge* ; and all that we desire is, That every Thing may be *weighed* impartially in the *Balances of the Sanctuary*, and that both they and we may be tried and judged according to the Word of God, and our Reformation and covenan-

venanted Principles agreeable thereto, laying aside Prejudice that blinds the Mind, and a partial Regard to any Sett of Men whatsoever.

The *first Thing* that we have *charged* against the *present prevailing Party* in our Judicatories, particularly in our General Assemblies and Commissions, is, *That they are breaking down our beautiful Presbyterian Constitution.* This will appear, if their Conduct, in the following particular Instances thereof, is seriously considered ;

*First, The General Assembly, at Edinburgh Anno 1639, do, by their Act August 30th, ordain,*  
 ‘ That no Novation, which may disturb the Peace  
 ‘ of the Church, and make Division, be suddenly  
 ‘ proponed and enacted, but so as the Motion be  
 ‘ first communicate to the several Synods, Presbyteries and Kirks, that the Matter may be approved by all at home, and Commissioners may come well prepared to conclude a solid Deliberation upon these Points in the General Assembly.’ This Act is renewed by the General Assembly 1695 ; and the General Assembly 1697 do, for preventing any *sudden Alteration or Innovation*, or other Prejudice to the Church, in either Doctrine or Worship, Discipline or Government, appoint, enact and declare, ‘ That, before any  
 ‘ General Assembly of this Church shall pass any  
 ‘ Acts which are to be binding Rules and Constitutions to the Church, the same be first proposed as Overtures to the Assembly ; and, being  
 ‘ by them passed as such, be remitted to the Consideration of the several Presbyteries of this  
 ‘ Church, and their Opinion and Consent reported by their Commissioners to the next General Assembly, who may pass the same into Acts,

‘ if



\* if the more general Opinion of the Church, thus  
 \* had, agree thereunto.

The Church of *Scotland* had been taught from  
 sad Experience, that even *General Assemblies*, u-  
 pon some Occasions, might be *constitute of such*  
*Members* who might bring in dangerous Innovati-  
 ons upon her ; and therefore this *Fence and Guard*  
 is wisely contrived upon our Doctrine, Worship,  
 Government and Discipline, That *Overtures*, as to  
 any Acts that are to be binding Rules to the Church,  
 should be *approv'd by all at home*, and that they  
 should be past into Acts, *only if the more general*  
*Opinion of the diffusive Church of Scotland agree*  
*thereunto*: But the *prevailing Party* in this e-  
 stablished Church have *broken down* this necessa-  
 ry *Fence and Guard* upon the just Rights and Pri-  
 vileges of this Church and the Members thereof.  
 We might upon this Head mention the Case of Mr.  
*Simson* Professor at *Glasgow*, who was convic-  
 ted before our Assemblies of gross Blasphemies  
 against the *great God our Saviour*. The *Process*  
 was transmitted by the Assembly 1728 to the seve-  
 ral *Presbyteries*, for their Judgment upon the  
*Censure* which he deserv'd ; and when the *Majori-*  
*ty of Presbyteries* by far did give their Judgment,  
 that he should be *deposed* from the Office of the  
 Holy Ministry, yet the *Assembly 1729* thought  
 fit to *rest in a Suspension*. We know it is alledged,  
 That, in this Case, there was no binding Rule  
 and Constitution made ; but we are sure this was a  
 Matter of the-greatest Moment and Importance to  
 the whole Church of *Scotland*, a Matter wherein  
 not the Maintenance, of the Doctrine contained  
 in our *Confession of Faith* only, but the Honour  
 of Him who is *God over all blessed for ever*, was  
 nearly concerned ; And besides, to *transmit the*

*Process* to *Presbyteries* for their *Judgment* upon the *Censure*, and yet not to regard them, appears to be as much inconsistent with itself, as it was a plain counteracting the *Judgment* of the *diffusive Church* of Scotland. But, not to insist further upon this at present, we offer the *two following Instances* of *binding Rules* and *Constitutions* unto this Church, that deserve a particular Consideration: The *First* is the *Act of Assembly 1732*, concerning the *Settlement of vacant Congregations*. This was so far from being *approved by all at home*, or from being agreeable to the *more general Opinion of the Church*, that the most Part of *Presbyteries* did declare themselves against it in the *Terms* in which it now stands; yet it was pass'd into a *standing and binding Rule*, contrary to the above *Acts of Assembly*, regulating the Manner of passing *Acts of general Concern* to the Church: As for the *Matter* of the said *Act*, we shall consider it under another Head. The other *Instance* we give is the *Act of Assembly 1730*, discharging the *recording of Reasons of Dissent* against the *Determinations of Church-judicatories*. This *Act* was passed without ever transmitting the same to the several *Presbyteries*; and the *Act* now mentioned is of greater Importance and of more dangerous Consequence than many apprehend, in regard it deprives all the *Ministers and Elders* of this Church at once, of the *Liberty* of entering their *Dissent*, with the *Reasons* thereof, into the Church's *Records*, and that upon the most urgent Occasions. This is a *Privilege* belong'd unto them by *Acts of former Assemblies*, and by *immemorial Custom and Practice*: And it is most just and reasonable, useful and necessary in many *Respects*, that *Dissents* with their *Reasons* should stand recorded, as

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*Testimonies* against such Determinations as appear unwarrantable, and of a dangerous Tendency; otherwise our Posterity, that may see the Records of our Church-judicatories, can form no just Judgment concerning the Opposition that is made to sinful and unwarrantable Decisions. And we may reasonably judge, that there was no Transmision of the said Act as an Overture to the respective Presbyteries, because the *prevailing Party* did easily see that it would meet with a *vigorous Opposition*, and that the *Majority* of Presbyteries would not readily agree unto it: This was evident from the *Representations* against it from many Presbyteries, and the *Instructions* that were given in for the *Repeal* of it to subsequent General Assemblies. And we must also add, That the passing of this Act so summarily and irregularly, at a Time wherein the present sad and threatening Aspect of Affairs in this Church, rendered the Maintenance and Exercise of the just Rights and Privileges of the Members thereof more necessary than at any Time since our late happy *Revolution*, cannot miss to have a very bad Appearance; and we cannot otherwise construct of it, than as *done with a Design to bury all faithful Testimonies against the Backslidings of this Church in Oblivion*, so that Generations to come may have no Knowledge of our present Contendings, and may be ready to imagine that we in this Period have been upon a *joint Conspiracy to betray the Work of God*. And the Act itself plainly argues, That the *prevailing Party* are themselves under a *secret Jealousy*, that their *Determinations*, according to the Chancel in which they run at present, *are not able to stand a fair Trial* at the Bar of God's Word, and the Principles of the Church of Scotland founded there-  
 G 2 upon.



upon. *Every one that doth Evil, hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd, or discovered (as in the Margin) But he that doth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, John iii. 20, 21.* If they were not afraid of a standing Testimony against their Determinations, why should the Members of Church-judicatories be precluded the Freedom and Liberty allowed in all free Courts whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, yea, in the high Court of Parliament itself?

To conclude this Head, Every unprejudiced and impartial Reader may judge if the present *prevailing Party* do act a very consistent Part, in casting us out from Ministerial Communion with them, for *protesting*, and that for our just Exoneration, against a particular Sentence and Decision of the General Assembly; when yet they themselves, if it serves to carry on their own Ends and Purposes, do *confidently tread upon the Authority of the Church*, expressed in the Acts of her General Assemblies, and in such Acts as are framed for a Fence and Guard against dangerous Innovations, that may be introduced by a corrupt Party, which may sometime bear the Majority in our General Assemblies, and make Acts and Constitutions contrary to the Sentiments of the diffused Church of Scotland.

2dly, It is a received Protestant Principle, as well as one of the known Principles of this Church, that 'The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Lord and Lawgiver unto his Church and People; and that he alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men, which are in any Thing contrary unto his Word, or besides it, in Matters of Faith or

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‘Worship.’ *Conf. Chap. 20. Sect. 2.* and the Scriptures there cited: As also, it is one of the received Principles of this Church, That the Power and Authority that the Lord Jesus has given unto the Office-bearers of his Houle, in their judicative Capacity, is not an *absolute* and *illimited* Authority; that it is not a *Lordly* and *Magisterial* Power, but that it is a *Ministerial* and *Stewardly* Power and Authority; an Authority and Power that must run in a direct Line of Subordination unto the Word of God; an Authority for Edification, and not for Destruction: And that all the *Decrees of Councils* are to be examined by the Word, and their Determinations are to be received with Reverence, if consonant to the Word of God; according to our *Confession, Chap. 1. Sect. 10. and Chap. 31. Sect. 3.* and the Scriptures cited. But the prevailing Party in the Judicatories of this Church have usurped a legislative Power and Authority over the Houle of God, in making *Laws and Constitutions*, that not only have no Manner of Warrant from the Word, but are contrary unto it; and they exercise a lordly and magisterial Power over the Flock and Heritage of God, in binding their Decrees upon the Consciences of the Members of the Church, by threatening and actually inflicting the highest Censures of the Church upon them, if they do not submit to their arbitrary Impositions: And this we judge to be a Thrust at our Constitution, and that in a most sensible Manner. The Truth of all this will evidently appear from the following particular Instances;

1st, By the Act of Assembly 1732, anent the Settlement of vacant Congregations, a legislative Power and Authority is exerted beside the Word, and contrary unto it; in regard this Act is conceived

ceived in such Terms, That a *conjunct Meeting of Heritors and Elders may impose a Minister upon a Congregation*, willing to chuse a Gospel-Pastor, when they are *dissenting and reclaiming*: Yea, if *Heritors* bear the *Majority* in the conjunct Meeting, they may impose a Minister upon a Congregation, when both *Elders and People* are dissenting and reclaiming. As this Practice is condemned by the Word of God, which in Matters of this Kind admits of no Difference betwixt *the Man with the Gold Ring in goodly Apparel*, and the *poor Man in mean Raiment*; so it is contrary to *Apostolical Practice and Example* recorded in the New Testament, according to which Office-bearers were given unto the Church, at the very first Erection and Constitution of the New-Testament Church, with the *Choice and Consent* of the Flock and Heritage of God, *Acts* i. 15. to the Close; & vi. 1,—7. Chap. 14. 23. and sundry other Texts of Scripture. And we cannot but look upon *Apostolical Practice and Example recorded in the New Testament* (as all the reformed Churches have hitherto done) to be *equivalent unto a positive Precept*. Likewise, by the foresaid Act of Assembly, this Church has taken into her Bosom, those that are openly disaffected unto our Presbyterian Constitution and covenanted Reformation, as well as declared Enemies to our *Sovereign King George* and the Protestant Succession in his Royal Family; in regard *Protestant Heritors*, without any other Qualification, are thereby vested with an *Ecclesiastical Right and Privilege* of electing and calling Ministers unto all the vacant Congregations in *Scotland* where they have Interest; and, if they are supernumerary to the well-affected Heritors and Elders in these Congregations, (which is frequently



quently the Case) they may impose Ministers upon these well-affected Congregations, tho' dissenting and reclaiming. We must further observe upon this Head, That this *new Rule*, laid down about the Settlement of vacant Congregations, is contrary to our *Books of Discipline first and second*; it is contrary to the *Act of Assembly 1649*; yea, it is not agreeable to the *Act of Parliament 1690*. This Act was not a Church-Rule; yet, since it is pretended that the Act 1732 is agreeable thereto, we must observe, That, tho' it is ordained by the said Act of Parliament 1690, that *Heritors and Elders shall name and propose One to the Congregation, to be approven or disapproven by them*; yet the said Act does not give an *elective Power* to the conjunct Meeting of Heritors and Elders, neither does it determine the Election to be finished before the Person is approven or disapproven by the Congregation, as is done by the Act of Assembly now complained of: Seeing then that the said Act differs so much from any Rule hitherto known in this Church about the Settlement of Ministers, we may ask our *Managers* if they can point us to any *Act or Constitution* in any of the *reformed Churches* that runs parallel unto it: Has ever any *Church but ours* delivered such a valuable Trust and Privilege into the Hands of their avowed and declared Enemies? Would not that *City* be reckoned infatuate, and would she not be lookt upon as bringing Destruction and Ruin upon herself, that should put it into the Hands of her *Enemies* to set Watchmen upon her Walls? And, would not the Enemy of such an infatuate City know well how to improve such an Advantage against her? and, would they not choose such to be set upon the Walls

Walls of the City, who would readily entertain a familiar Correspondence with them, and who might sometime or other *betray the City* with all her Rights and Privileges into their Hands?

A *Second Instance* we give of a *Magisterial and Lordly Power exercised over the Flock and Heritage of God*, is, The violent *Intrusions of Ministers upon Christian Congregations*, that have taken Place by the Order of some late *Assemblies* and their *Commissions*, not only upon the Footing of the Act 1732, but even of the *Patronage-Act* itself, where the least *Concurrence* could be obtained; and sometimes (as in the Case of *Kinross*) Settlements have been ordered *contrary* to both these Rules. Now, whatever Disputes have been about the Right of the Christian People to elect their own Pastors, yet we know few or none that have pretended to defend the Warrantableness of *imposing a Minister upon a dissenting and reclaiming People*; but *such violent Intrusions* are very common at this Day, whereby the great End and Design of a Gospel-Ministry, in the Edification of Souls, is defeated; innumerable Divisions and Convulsions in the Body of Christ, occasioned; the Spirits of the Godly grieved, and their Affections alienated; and the Peace and the Unity of the Church broken and ruined: And, tho' the Blame of all these bad Consequences is most unjustly laid upon the Back of these who bear faithful Testimony against these and the like sinful Measures, as if they were the only *Troublers of our Israel*; yet it was one of the principal Grounds, not only of Separation, but of Suffering in the late Times of Persecution, That these of the *Presbyterian Perswasion* could not join in publick Worship with the *Ministers intruded upon them by the Bishop and Pa-*

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iron, without the *free Choice and Consent* of the People: And we can see no material Difference between a Minister *imposed by a Bishop and Patron*, and his being *intruded by an Assembly or Commission of Presbyterian Ministers*, joining Hands with a Patron or a few disaffected Gentlemen not of our Communion, except that it is agreeable unto the Principles of the *first*, but inconsistent with the known Principles of the *last*.

3dly, Not only is a *lordly and magisterial Power* exercised in the violent Settlement of Congregations in all Corners of the Land, but the *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of the Church have most unwarrantably proceeded to *inflict one of the highest Censures of the Church*, even *Excommunication from sealing Ordinances*, upon such as have not Freedom to submit to the Ministry of those that are *intruded* upon them; as also, they have threatned the *highest Censures of the Church* upon *Ministers* that shall *admit to sealing Ordinances* the People who cannot submit to *Intruders*. This is done by the Act of the last *Assembly*, discharging the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under Pain of the highest Censure, to admit any of the Parish of *Kinross* to sealing Ordinances, without the Permission of the present *Incumbent*; and also, in Connection herewith, they appointed them to read from their Pulpits the Act of Assembly 1647, *against such as withdraw themselves from the publick Worship in their own Congregations*; which Act was made with Reference to those who were regularly called to the Holy Ministry by the Judgment of the Presbytery, and Consent of the Congregation, and who besides had the Qualifications mentioned in the same Act; but we cannot conceive, that the Act was ever in-



tended to countenance the Design for which it was recommended by the last Assembly, namely, to oblige the People of every Congregation to submit to the Ministry of these who are violently imposed upon them by the Judicatories of the Church; and also, to expose to Censure these Brethren who should admit to sealing Ordinances these who have not Freedom to own the Ministry of such Intruders. Now, the *Assembly's* appointing such severe Censures to be inflicted upon their Christian Brethren, both Ministers and People, who have not Freedom to give Countenance to the Ministry of such as are intruded upon Christian Congregations, appears to us to be an unwarrantable *Narrowing* of the Terms of *Christian*, as well as *Ministerial* Communion, and also a Piece of *Tyranny* upon the *Consciences* of Men, vastly unbecoming a Church that bears the Name of *Protestant*: And as it is contrary unto the Command of the Head of the Church, by the Apostle, 1 Pet. v. 3. *Neither as being Lords over God's Heritage*; so it is cross to one great End and Design of Church Government and Discipline, viz. the *Edification of the Body of Christ*.

A fourth Instance that we give of the *magisterial* and *arbitrary* Proceedings of the *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of the Church, is the *Act and Sentence* past against us by the last *Assembly*. The Synod of *Perth* and *Sirling* having condemned in *Bulk* several Propositions emitted by Mr. *Erskine*, without regarding his *Answers* to their Charge, the Assembly thought fit to *affirm* their Sentence, as also to *condemn* his *Answers* to the Synod's Charge, and then they appointed him to be *rebuked* and admonished at their own *Bar*; and all this without any Regard had to the

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*Form of Process*, which ordains, *Chap. I. § 4.*  
 ' That nothing be admitted by any Judicatory as  
 ' a Ground of Process for Censure, but what hath  
 ' been declared censurable by the Word of God,  
 ' or some Act or universal Custom of this national Church agreeable thereunto.' Tho' the  
*Act and Sentence* of the last *Assembly* does not  
 bear, that Mr. *Erskine* was convicted of any Thing  
 declared to be censurable by the Word of God,  
 or any Act and Custom of this national Church  
 agreeable thereto; yet the *solemn Censure* of Re-  
 buke and Admonition is pronounced against him:  
 And, for what is he rebuked? It is said, For *indecent Expressions*: But what these indecent Ex-  
 pressions are, the Act and Sentence does not men-  
 tion; only we are told in general, It is for *indecent Expressions, tending to disquiet the Peace of*  
*this Church, and impugning several Acts of As-*  
*sembly and Proceedings of the Church-Judica-*  
*tories.* And when this is compared with the Ex-  
 pressions of his Sermon condemned by the Synod of  
*Pertb* and afterwards by the *Assembly*, and his An-  
 swers thereunto, which were likewise condemned  
 in gros by the *Assembly*, it is evident the great  
 Quarrel was, his *testifying freely from the Pul-*  
*pit against the Act of Assembly 1732, and the*  
*violent Settlements of Ministers in all Corners of*  
*the Land:* This the *Assembly* reckoned an *inde-*  
*cent Freedom*, that could not be born; and there-  
 fore they appointed him to be rebuk'd and admo-  
 nished at their Bar. The foresaid Sentence of  
 Rebuke and Admonition appearing evidently to  
 us to lay a Restraint upon that Freedom and  
 Faithfulness in *testifying against publick Sins and*  
*Defections*, which is required of Ministers by the  
 Word of God, and by Acts of former Assemblies,

particularly by the Act of Assembly 1648, intituled, *An Act for censuring Ministers for their Silence, and not speaking to the Corruptions of the Times*, unto which they are also bound by their Ordination Vows and Engagements; we therefore judged it our Duty, upon Intimation of the above Act of Assembly, to *protest for our just Right and Privilege to testify on all proper Occasions against the Act of Assembly 1732, or the like Desections*: And this is reckoned to be such a hainous Crime, that, without once hearing us upon the Cause, we were summarily sentenced by the Assembly to be *suspended* from all the Parts of our ministerial Office by the Commission at their Meeting in *August*, if we did not retract our Protestation, and declare our Sorrow for the same. But, what is our Crime? and wherein have we offended? Is it the *Matter* of our *Protestation* that is found fault with? Yet, since the foresaid Act of Assembly, and the above-mentioned Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church, with others which we shall yet name, are both sinful and unwarrantable; then our Protestation, as to the Matter of it, is both lawful and warrantable: But, if it is because we offered our *Testimony* under the *Form of a Protestation* that the Assembly have proceeded against us with such uncommon Rigour, then we affirm, That, when there was a *recorded Censure* for that which we are perswaded was *necessary and seasonable Duty*, there was no other Way for giving an *equivalent Testimony* for injured Truth, and against an unwarrantable Restraint upon ministerial Freedom, but by entering our *Protestation*; this is the only habile Way for having a *Testimony recorded*, that thereby our just Rights and Privileges may be asserted, the Honour of Truth may be preserved, and a Testi-

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mony for the same may be *legally* transmitted to succeeding Generations. Where is then our Crime? The Assembly condemn us to be *suspended*, and appoint a *higher Censure* to be inflicted in case we did not obey the Sentence of Suspension. If we had disowned any Article in our *Confession* of Faith, if we had impugned any of our known and received Principles, the Assembly might have very justly censured us; but this is not so much as alleged in the Sentences past against us. Are we guilty of despising the just Authority and Power of the Judicatories of the Church? Nay, our *Protestation acknowledges the same*; and we have declared, in our several Representations given in to the Commission, that it was a *Protestation* for our *Exoneration*, or our *attested Declaration and Testimony against the wrong Exercise of Ecclesiastical Power and Authority*. If ever Church-authority was skrewed up to an uncommon Height, if ever Church-censures were inflicted in an arbitrary Manner, it is in this Case. Our *Form of Process*, as we have already observed, ordains, That nothing be admitted by any Judicatory as a Ground of Process for Censure, but what hath been declared censurable by the Word of God, or some Act or universal Custom of this national Church agreeable thereto. We ask the present Managers, Is a *Protestation* for *Exoneration*, against an Act or Sentence of a General Assembly, censurable by the Word of God, or any Act of this national Church? If they say it is, let them produce that Passage of the Word of God, or let them point out unto us an Act of any of our General Assemblies declaring so much; or, if they say it is by universal Custom, we are ready to instruct the contrary, and that *Protestations*

tions have been entred against Acts and Sentences  
 of our General Assemblies by some eminent Ministers  
 of this Church, and yet we do not find that they  
 were censured for doing so. Yea, our first Assemblies  
 after the *Revolution* had such a Regard to  
 the Protestations entred against the Assemblies after  
 the Year 1649, that they allowed none of the  
 Acts and Proceedings of these Assemblies to be  
 entred into the printed Records of this Church  
 and the General Assembly 1690 do by the  
 thirteenth Act declare, ' All Sentences past against  
 ' any Ministers *hinc inde* by any Church-Judicatory  
 ' tory upon the Account of the late Differences  
 ' among Presbyterians (that is, for the Protestations  
 ' entred against the then Assemblies and the  
 ' Proceedings) ' from the Year 1650 till the  
 ' introduction of Prelacy, to be of themselves void  
 ' and null to all Effects and Intents.' And indeed  
 no reformed Church, before now, has made it a  
 of *Communion* with them, that none of the  
 Members should ever *protest* against any of the  
 Proceedings; nor could any Man with a safe Con-  
 science be Member of any Court whatsoever, unless  
 the Privilege of *Dissenting* and *Protesting* in  
 some Cases were allowed him; because these are  
 the only Means in a *Judicatory* whereby a Man  
 can exoner his own Conscience, and do Justice to  
 Truth when it is injured, and doth not imply  
 a Contempt of Authority *lawfully* exercised, but  
 only a Pleading and Contending for the free Exer-  
 cise of the Laws and Privileges of the Society.  
 And therefore it is Matter of Regrete, that the  
*prevailing* Party in the established Church  
 should attempt to secure their Authority by such  
 an unlawful Mean, to accomplish which, they  
 have proceeded against us with such Rigour

cannot be paralleled in any Church that renounces the Title of *Infallibility*.  
*Thirdly*, Our Presbyterian Constitution is likewise subverted by the unwarrantable and arbitrary Proceedings of the Commission of our General Assemblies for some Years bypast, and herein they are supported and countenanced by the prevailing Party in the several Assemblies of this Church. The Truth of this may be evident to all who seriously consider the Proceedings of the Commission of late, and how they have in a most arbitrary and absolute Manner decided Causes referred to them, in Opposition to the Rule of the Word, and the Principles and Constitution of the Church of Scotland; as is manifest in the Cases of *Balfron, Hutton, West-kirk, Kinross*, and many others; and it is very dangerous and pernicious to the Interest and Kingdom of Christ in this Land, that it is pled upon all Occasions, that their Sentences, however unjust, are yet irreversible; which makes the Will and Pleasure of that Court the Rule and Measure of Right and Wrong, and of almost the whole publick Affairs of this Church, seeing our Assemblies now-a-days determine few Causes themselves, and these frequently of the smallest Moment, but refer most of their Affairs to the Commission. And this Plea for the Irreversibleness of their Sentences appears the more unjustifiable, when it is considered, that no plausible Reason can be advanced, why a delegate Court such as the Commission is, and which has no Manner of Foundation in the Word, unless consider'd as a Committee of the former Assembly, should be accountable to the following for their Conduct, and yet their Decisions should not be reversible by them, even tho' they are found



found by the Assembly to be such as are not agreeable to the Rules of this Church ; yea, that this is most unreasonable, is plain from the *Nature of the Thing*, and from older and later Acts of Assembly regulating the Powers of the Commission. And likewise, the said Court, that they may the more effectually invade and bury the Liberties of all concerned in Causes referred to them, have assumed to themselves a Power of erecting *Sub-commissions*, contrary to the common Maxim, *Delegatus non potest delegari*; and have invested them with Powers they had not committed to themselves by the *Assembly* their *Constituents*, and which it is not in the Power even of the Assembly to give them, to wit, to invade the Rights of *Presbyteries*, who are *radical Judicatories*; to take *Trial of the Gifts of young Men*, and to settle them contrary unto the declared Mind both of the *Presbyteries* in which, and of the *Parishes* over which, they are settled, without waiting the Judgment of the ensuing Assembly, and having their Authority interposed thereunto, tho' *Protestations* for Liberty to complain to the Assembly had been entred in due Time and Form.

The above Conduct of the *Commission* appears to us to strike at the very *Root* of our *Presbyterian Constitution*, and to be a Piece of *Tyranny* equal to any Thing exercised by the *Diocesan Prelates* when they were in Power and Authority in the Land. It is a *Presbyterian Principle*, founded upon the Word of God, That the *authoritative Mission* of Men unto the Work and Office of the Holy Ministry, by the Trial of their Gifts and Qualifications, and the setting of them apart to that sacred Office by Prayer and Imposition of Hands, belongs unto a *constitute Presbytery*. It is also

No. a received Principle amongst us, That the  
 Power of superior Courts over a Presbytery is not  
 a *privative*, but a *cumulative* Power and Authority;  
 that is, Neither *Synods* nor *Assemblies*, nor their  
*Commissions*, can deprive *Presbyteries* of these in-  
 herent Rights and Privileges that belong unto  
 them, or of that Power and Authority that they  
 have received from the Lord Jesus the only *Head*  
 and *King* of the Church, but that they ought to  
*protect* and *support* them in the Exercise of the  
 same: But the *present Management* of the *Commis-*  
*sions* of our several General Assemblies, in appoint-  
 ing *Committees* with a *Power of Trial and Ordina-*  
*tion*, is a taking of that Power out of the Hands  
 of *Presbyteries*, which *properly belongs* unto  
 them; And at the same Time an erecting of a  
 Court, with a Power of Mission unto the Work  
 and Office of the Ministry, that has no Manner of  
 Foundation in the Word of God: If it is said, That  
 this is done because *Presbyteries* are *disobedient* to  
 the Sentences of the *Commission*, who are their Su-  
 periors: The plain Matter is, It is done because  
*Presbyteries* cannot comply with the *sinful* and  
*unwarrantable Orders* of the *Commission*, such as  
 the *mock Moderation* of Calls, as every reasonable  
 Man must judge the Sentence of the *Commission*  
 in *August* last to have been, appointing the Presby-  
 tery of *Auchterarder* to moderate in a Call for the  
 Presentee to the Parish of *Muckhart*, *exclusive of*  
*any other*: It is done, because they cannot, in a  
 Consistency with Presbyterian Principles, proceed  
 to the Settlement of Ministers upon the Foot of  
*Presentations* and otherwise, when the Congrega-  
 tions concerned are *dissenting* and *reclaiming*.  
 For these and the like Reasons, the *Commission*  
 takes the Settlement of Parishes out of the Hands of

*Presbyteries*, and lodges the Power of Trial and Ordination in a *Committee* of their own naming, and frequently many of them are not *Members* of the *Commission*, but all of them are select and picked Men, who they know very well will yield ready Obedience to the Orders of the prevailing Party. May we not upon the Whole ask our present *Managers*, What Difference there is betwixt fourteen *Diocesan Prelates* their taking the Power of Trial and Ordination out of the Hands of all the *Presbyteries* in *Scotland*, and a *Commission* of the *General Assembly*, whereof *Thirty one* make a *Quorum*, their divesting all the *Presbyteries* of *Scotland* of this inherent Right and Privilege, when their sinful and unwarrantable Orders are not obeyed? For our Part, we know none, except that the former exercise this lordly Dominion over the Heritage of God, in a plain Consistency with their declared Principles; when the latter do it under a *Presbyterian Mask*, but in a direct Inconsistency with their professed and known Principles. Hence it is, that the Flock of Christ are wounded and grieved, scattered and broken through the Land; the Wicked are hardened, and this Church is become the Derision of her Enemies.

We must here likewise observe, That these arbitrary and unwarrantable Proceedings of the *Commission*, by which the Liberties of particular Congregations, and the Rights of *Presbyteries*, are invaded and born down these several Years bypast, have been supported by the *Assemblies* of this Church, in so far as they have resolutely refused all Applications to reverse any one of the most iniquitous of their Sentences; so that all Corners of this Church have been left to groan under the Load of their Oppression, with no other Allevia-  
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tion but that the Assemblies of the Church *disapproved* in some Cases of the Commission's Conduct, that is, they owned that the complaining Congregations and Presbyteries were wronged and oppressed by that Court, but would do nothing to relieve them from such a grievous Calamity.

Now, that we may conclude what we intended for the *Proof* of the *first Branch* of the *general Charge* against the *prevailing Party* in the established Church; Since it is so, that they are *breaking down the Fences and Guards* against Innovations in our Doctrine and Worship, Government and Discipline; and seeing they *exercise a legislative Power and Authority* over the House of God, in Opposition to the Laws and Ordinances of the Lord and Master of the House, and bind their iniquitous Decrees upon the Consciences of the Children of the House, by inflicting the *highest Censures* upon them if they do not submit to their unjust and arbitrary Sentences; and since *Prelatick Dominion and Tyranny* has crept in, and is carried on under the Mask of Presbyterian Church-Government; Must not every sober and unprejudiced Person judge, that they are *subverting our beautiful Presbyterian Constitution*? And, tho' the Keys of Government and Discipline are committed unto the Office-bears of the Church by Christ her Glorious Head, for the Edification of his Body, for the Preservation of the Institutions of Christ in their Purity, for the Maintenance of that *Liberty wherewith Christ has made his People free, that they may not be intangled with any Yoke of Bondage*, for the Purging of the House of God of unsound Ministers and Members, for the Removal of Offences whereby the Flock of Christ may be hurt or *stumbled*, for the restraining the open Enemies of Christ

and his Kingdom, for the *Catching of Foxes* that *spoil his tender Vines*, and for separating betwixt the Holy and Prophane, that the valuable Privileges of God's Children may not be cast unto *Dogs*: Tho', we say, the *Keys* of Government and Discipline are given to the Ministers and Elders of the Church for these and the like great and excellent Ends; Yet, are they not perverted by our *present Managers* to quite opposite Ends and Uses? Is not the Door cast open, by an Ecclesiastical Ordinance and Constitution, to a corrupt Ministry to enter into the Church of Christ? Is not the Heritage of God oppressed by a continued Series and Tract of unprecedented Intrusions upon them? Is not the Edge of Discipline turned against these (both Ministers and People) that testify a Regard to the Laws, Ordinances and Institutions of the Head of the Church? Are not such as are in Principle declared Enemies to our covenanted Reformation, and in Practice prophane and scandalous, if they bear the Name of *Protestant*, received in to the Bosom of the Church, and intrusted with one of her most sacred and valuable Rights and Privileges? And therefore, tho' we have the *Form* of Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies; yet, what is the *Form of Government*, but like the *Form of Godliness*, when the Life and Power of it is gone? It is no more as the Shadow without the Substance, or as the Body without the Spirit, or as a Carcase without Life; and that it should be so in the Church of *Scotland*, once so famous amongst the Churches, ah! that it should be *sold in Gath*, or *heard in the Streets of Ashkelon*.

We proceed now to the *Second Branch* of the  
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general Charge that we have laid against the *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of the Church, viz. *That they are pursuing such Measures as do actually corrupt, or have the most direct Tendency to corrupt, the Doctrine contained in our excellent Confession of Faith.*

Altho' this Church hath been famous in former Times for Purity of Doctrine, and for witnessing against every Thing that had a Tendency to obscure or pervert the Simplicity of the Gospel, and so answered the Character of being the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; Yet we cannot but notice it with Regret, that she has now fallen in a great Measure from her former Zeal that Way. Altho' many of the precious and *fundamental Truths* of our Holy Religion, which touch the eternal Salvation of Souls, have been *attack'd*, and pernicious Soul-ruining Errors of late *vented*, both in our *Neighbourhood* and *within our own Bosom*; yet this Church's Zeal hath not moved her, according to Duty, to *display a Banner for Truth*, that it might be given to them that fear him: Yea, gross Errors and erroneous Persons are countenanced and encouraged, in so far as no *suitable Testimony* is given against them. But the Truth of what is laid in our general Charge will more fully appear, if the following particular Instances are seriously considered;

1<sup>st</sup>, When the *Arian Heresy* was some Years ago, like the *noisom Pestilence*, running through *England and Ireland*, and our orthodox Brethren there were contending in the *high Places of the Field*, for the *Independency and Supreme Deity of the Son of God our Glorious Redeemer*; It might have been expected, that this Church should have *come up, at that Time, to the Help of the Lord,*



*to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty*, by  
 lifting up the Standard of a faithful *Testimony*, for  
 the Honour of Christ, the Encouragement of our  
 Brethren, and for preventing the Contagion of that  
 Heresy its entring within our own Borders: But,  
 tho' this was moved, yet nothing suitable to such  
 a Call in Providence was done; and therefore,  
 God, in a Way of Righteous Judgment, suffered  
 that blasphemous Heresy to enter so far into our  
 Borders, as to poison one of the *principal Semina-*  
*ries* for the Holy Ministry in this Church; as is e-  
 vident from the *Process* against *Professor Simson*,  
 who was brought before the Bar of our Assemblies  
 in the Years 1727, &c. And when it was found  
 clearly proven, ' That, in teaching his Students,  
 ' he had denied the Necessary Existence of our  
 ' Lord Jesus Christ; and that he had affirmed,  
 ' That his Necessary Existence is a Thing we know  
 ' not; and that the Term, Necessary Existence,  
 ' was impertinent, and not to be used when talking  
 ' of the Trinity; and that the Three Persons of  
 ' the adorable Trinity are not to be said to be  
 ' numerically One in Substance and Essence; and  
 ' that the Terms, Necessary Existence, Supreme  
 ' Deity, and the Title of the only true God, may  
 ' be taken, and are by some Authors taken, in a  
 ' Sense that includes the personal Property of the  
 ' Father, and so not belonging to the Son: ' We  
 say, When these Articles, whereby he had attempt-  
 ed to *depose the Son of God from his True and*  
*Supreme Deity*, were found clearly proven; and,  
 to express it in the Words of the Reverend Mr.  
*Boston* now deceased, (when offering his Protest a-  
 gainst the Assembly's Determination in that Mat-  
 ter) *The Son of God was as it were appearing at*  
*the Bar of that Assembly, craving Justice against*

one who had derogate from his Essential Glory, and blasphemed his Name, at which every Knee should bow; Yet the Concern of this Church for these Foundation-Truths of our holy Christian Religion went no higher than a bare Suspension of the Blasphemer from Teaching and Preaching, and all Exercise of any Ecclesiastical Power and Function, leaving the Door open to another Assembly to relax him from the said Sentence. As the Assembly 1729 did rest in the above Sentence of Suspension, contrary to the declared Mind of the most of the Presbyteries in this National Church, so the Censure inflicted was nowise adequate to the Grossness of the Errors that had been proven against the said Mr. Simson; yea, such Countenance is given him, as that he continues still to bear the Character of a Minister of the establish'd Church; and he is possess'd of his Benefice, to the great Prejudice of the Church, which is thereby precluded the Benefit of an Orthodox Professor in his Place, for training up Men for the Ministry in the sound Principles of our holy Religion.

2dly, Whereas the said Professor Simson was processed before the Judicatories of this Church, in the Years 1715 and 1716, for several gross and dangerous Errors; the General Assembly, in the Year 1717, did find, ' That he had vented some  
 ' Opinions not necessary to be taught in Divinity,  
 ' and that had given more Occasion to Strife than  
 ' to the promoting of Edification; and that he had  
 ' used some Expressions that bear, and are used by  
 ' Adversaries in a bad and unsound Sense; and that  
 ' he had adopted some Hypotheses different from  
 ' what are commonly used among Orthodox Di-  
 ' vines, that are not evidently founded on Scripture,  
 ' and tend to attribute too much to natural Reason  
 and

\* and the Power of corrupt Nature ; which un-  
 \* due Advancement of Reason and Nature (says  
 the Assembly) ' is always to the Disparagement  
 \* of Revelation and efficacious free Grace.' And,  
 for those Reasons, the Assembly did *prohibite and*  
*discharge Mr. Simson to use such Expressions, or*  
*to teach, preach, or otherwise vent such Opinions,*  
*Propositions, or Hypotheses.* And when he was  
 brought under Process for the above damnable He-  
 resies mentioned in the former Head, the General  
 Assembly did in the Year 1726, by their Act for  
 the preserving the Purity of Doctrine, appoint  
 the Presbytery of *Glasgow*, with a Committee  
 they had named for their Help and Assistance, to  
 enquire how the said Mr. *Simson* had obeyed the  
 Injunctions of the General Assembly 1717 as to the  
 Points which they had then prohibited him to  
 teach ; and the said Presbytery having found  
 Ground for a *Process* against him for *contraveen-*  
*ing the Act of Assembly 1717*, the same was  
 carried on by a Committee appointed by the As-  
 sembly 1727, who found by the Depositions of  
 Witnesses, that Mr. *Simson* had taught his Stu-  
 dents, ' That the Heathen by the Light of Na-  
 \* ture, including Tradition, may know that God  
 \* is reconcilable to Sinners ; and that they may  
 \* know there is a Remedy for Sin provided, which  
 \* may be called an implicate or obscure Revelation  
 \* of the Gospel ; and that it is probable that none  
 \* are excluded from the Benefit of the Remedy  
 \* for Sin, provided by God, and published twice  
 \* to the World, except these who by their actual  
 \* Sin exclude themselves, and slight or reject  
 \* either the clearer Light of the Gospel revealed  
 \* to the Church, or, that obscure Discovery and  
 \* Offer of Grace made to all without the Church ;  
 and



and that, if the Heathen, in the Use of the Means they have, would seek the Knowledge of the Way of Reconciliation, God would discover it to them.' As also, that he taught, 'That there are Means appointed of God for obtaining saving Grace; which Means, when diligently used, with Seriousness, Sincerity, and Faith of being heard, God hath promised to bless with Success; and that the going about these Means, in the foresaid Manner, is not above the Reach of our natural Abilities and Powers.' And that he used these Words, '*Ratio est principium & fundamentum Theologiæ*, which bear, and are used by Adversaries in an unsound Sense, tho' he disowned the unsound Sense of them.' And likewise, that he taught, 'That there was no proper Covenant made with *Adam*; and that *Adam* was not a Federal Head to his Posterity; and that it is inconsistent with the Justice and Goodness of God, to create a Soul without original Righteousness, or Dispositions to Good; and that the Souls of Infants since the Fall, as they came from the Hands of their Creator, are as pure and holy as the Souls of Infants would have been created, supposing Man had not fallen; and that they are as pure and holy as *Adam's* was created, except as to these Qualifications and Habits which he received as being created in an adult State; and that it is more than probable that all baptized Infants, dying in Infancy, are saved; and that is manifest, that, if God should deny his Grace to all or any of the Children of Infidels, he would deal more severely with them than he did with the fallen Angels.' And likewise, that he taught, 'That, were it not for the Prospect of Happiness, he

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could

“could not, and therefore would not serve God;  
 “and that there will be no Sinning in Hell after  
 “the last Judgment.”

The *Assembly's Committee*, having found it proven that Mr. *Simson* had taught the *above pernicious Errors*, laid the whole of their Proceeding before the Assembly 1728; but neither did that *Assembly*, nor the *following* who concluded the Process against him, *take any Notice of these gross Errors*: And tho' there is just Ground to fear that many have imbibed them, to the endangering of the Purity of the Doctrine of this Church; yet no Regard is had to these Things, but all is pass'd over by our Assemblies ever since, with a *profound Silence*; and this Omission we judge to be the more culpable, in regard he had taught the above Errors in *Contravention of the Act of Assembly 1717*. The common Maxim, *Qui tacet consentire videtur*, was very much pled in the Assembly 1732, to bring in these Presbyteries, who had sent up no Opinion with respect to the Overture anent planting vacant Congregations, as *Consenters* to it; and this was made use of as a Handle for voting it into a standing Act: But we are much mistaken if it be not far more applicable to the Case in Hand, considering the Trust committed by the Lord to the Judicatories of his Church, with respect unto damnable Errors openly vented and found proven before them, especially by a *Professor of Divinity*.

3dly, Altho' our *General Assemblies* have been frequently addressed, by *Representations* and *Instructions* from many *Synods* and *Presbyteries*, representing the Necessity of an *assertory Act*, *affirming and owning the Truths* injured and opposed by the above-mentioned dangerous Errors vented

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ted by Mr. Simson ; as also, that a *solemn Warning might be emitted*, discovering the Evil and dangerous Tendency of them : Yet the *prevailing Party* in our Judicatories *have given a deaf Ear* to all these Representations, and *disregard* all such seasonable and necessary Instructions ; and we cannot but look upon this Conduct as most injurious to the great and precious Truths of God, that have been attackt in such a bold and daring Manner. *Truth* has for many Years bypast been lying wounded and bleeding in our Streets, craving that Justice might be done her, particularly by the *Church-Representative*, which is in a peculiar Manner the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. and to whom it belongs in a special Manner to publish and declare, to uphold and defend, all the Truths of God delivered in his Word, against open and avowed Enemies, or secret Underminers of the same : Yea, as it is a Debt that one Generation owes unto another, to transmit the Truths of God in their Purity to Posterity ; so these *Truths* that are *opposed* and *assaulted* ought to be delivered off our Hands to the rising Generation, with some more *peculiar* and *solemn Testimony* unto them. And therefore we cannot but look upon the above Omission of our General Assemblies to be an Injury done to Truth, to be contrary to our solemn Covenant-Engagements, to be Unjustice done to our Posterity, and to have no small Tendency towards the hardening of such as may be tainted with the above Errors, as also towards the spreading of this corrupt Leaven amongst others.

4thly, A *Scheme of erroneous Principles* has likewise been *vented* of late by Mr. Archibald Campbell Professor of Church-history in St. An-



draws, in some late Prints emitted by him, having a manifest Tendency to *subvert revealed Religion*, and to expose practical serious Godliness under the Notion of *Enthusiasm*, as in his *Discourse* proving that the *Apostles* were not *Enthusiasts*, and the *Preface* thereto prefixt; as also to advance Self-love as the *leading Principle* in all our Actions whatsoever, as in his *Enquiry into the Original of moral Virtue*: And he has the *Assurance* to affirm, in his *Latine Discourse* before the *University of St. Andrews*, That the *Being of God, and the Immortality of the Soul*, cannot be known by the *Light of Nature*, without the *Aid and Assistance of Tradition*, contrary unto the express Doctrine delivered in the 1st Sect. of the 1st Chap. of our *Confession of Faith*, and *Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3. The Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work, &c. yea, The invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head, Rom. i. 20.* And tho' these, and other Errors vented by the said Mr. Campbell, are open and notour from the Books published by him, and have been *sufficiently exposed* by several *private Hands*; yet, instead of commencing any Process against the *Author*, he is carressed and countenanced in our Assemblies, as being a *fit Man* for the Purpose of our *ruling Side*, who are carrying on the present Course of Defection.

5thly, We reckon also, that a *Wound* was given, by the Sentence of Assembly 1733, to several *precious Truths*, emitted by Mr. Erskine in his *Synodical Sermon*, and in his *written Answers*

swers given in to the Synod, which the *Assembly*, by the *foresaid Act*, thought fit likewise to condemn; as tho' they were offensive, and tended to disturb the Peace and good Order of this Church; tho' they be founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable to our approved Standards, as was cleared in one of the *Representations* given in to the Commission in *August* last: By which it appears to us, that these *perilous Times* are now come in our Land, wherein Men cannot endure sound *Doctrine*, but turn away their Ears from the Truth, and look upon such as Enemies to the established Church, who declare the Truth, and bear Testimony to it from the Pulpit, when it is wounded and falling in our Streets.

6thly, Altho' this Church owns the Westminster Confession of Faith, and all Intrants into the Ministry be obliged to subscribe it as the Confession of their Faith; yet, How little of that Scheme and Order of Doctrine is taught at this Day? particularly by many Preachers and Ministers that have lately entred into the Church, while there is as little of Christ to be found in most of their Discourses, as in *Plato's* or *Seneca's* Morals; and, if he be at all preached, he is preached as the Pattern, not of Gospel-Holiness, but of abstracted Morality; at best, as the Author of a new Gospel-law, enjoining Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience, as the Conditions of a New Covenant, and of a Sinner's Justification before God. People are generally pressed to the Practice of Duty, as if their Abilities for Obedience at the Creation were not entirely lost by the Fall of Adam. Tho' Man be naturally married to the Law as a Covenant, and be seeking Life and Righteousness upon the Footing of his own Obedience; yet, how little Care is taken to

to preach the *Law* in its *Spirituality*, *Extent* and *Severity*, condemning every Man to Death and the Curse, that *continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, in order to discover the Depravation of Nature, and the utter Impotency of fallen Man to please God by his Obedience? How little Digging into the cursed Root of *Original Sin* imputed and inherent, or laying open the Deceitfulness and desperate Wickedness of the Heart, that so Sinners may be brought off from the Covenant of Works, unto Him who is the *alone Foundation that God hath laid in Zion*, and who is become the *End of the Law for Righteousness unto every one that believes*? And, tho' they profess to own and acknowledge the inviolable and perpetual Obligation of the righteous and holy Law of God upon the Regenerate as well as the Unregenerate, which we believe and hold as a most firm and certain Truth; yet, how little are the Duties of Obedience to it preached in a *Gospel-Way*? How little are they enforced from Gospel-Motives, or prest for Gospel-Ends and Purposes? How little is the Necessity of a vital Union with Christ discovered, in order to our yielding acceptable Obedience to the Law? How little of free Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, is taught, or of the Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification, as inseparably connected with Justification, and maintained and carried on by a *Life of Faith on the Son of God, who is made of God unto us*, not only *Righteousness*, but *Sanctification*? These, and the like supernatural Mysteries, are in a great Measure *explored and discarded* by our modest Haranguers, and a dry, sapless and lifeless Descanting upon the moral Virtues introduced into the Room thereof; by which



which Means, they who have *their Senses exercised to discern Good and Evil*, are set a wandering for the Bread of their Souls, where they can have it; and others, who have their Ears tickled with an *empty Sound of Words*, left to perish for lack of the Knowledge of the Gospel, and of the Way of Salvation by Christ in a Covenant of Grace.

Now, to shut up this Head, we must observe, That an *Overture* against this dangerous *Innovation*, both in the Method and Strain of Preaching, was *referred* by two several *General Assemblies*, Anno 1726, 1727, to the respective *Commissions*, to be considered and prepared by them in order to be turned into an *Act*: Yet *nothing was done*; it was *dropt*, through the Influence of the *ruling Party*; and by this Means these Evils are on the growing Hand, and therefore are *justly chargeable* on the *Management* of the *prevailing Party*, who are carrying on the present Course of Defection.

From all the above *Instances* it is evident, That the *present prevailing Party* in the *Judicatories* of this Church are *pursuing such Measures as do actually corrupt, or have the most direct Tendency to corrupt, the Doctrine contained in our excellent Confession of Faith*; in regard that no full and free Testimony has been given for the Truths of God, and against the dangerous Errors that are vented and propagate unto the Prejudice and Subversion of the same; and in regard that no adequate Censure has been inflicted upon erroneous and corrupt Teachers; yea, such are held and kept in Ministerial Communion, and have no small Regard shown them in our supreme *Judicatories*: And seeing the Church of *Scotland* is in such Circumstances at present, through the Influence and Management of the *prevailing Party*; there

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is too much Ground to fear, that in a little Time (if God do not prevent) this *established Church* shall only be *Orthodox*, in the same Sense that the Church of England is so, by subscribing the 39 *Articles* which are truly *Calvinist* in the Doctrinal Parts, while yet *Arminian* Doctrine is everywhere taught by her *Clergy*: Upon which Account, we judge this Generation and our poor Posterity in the utmost Danger of losing the Gospel in its Power and Purity, *through the Prevalency of a corrupt and unsound Ministry*. If a Man have any little Acquaintance with what they call the *Belle-Letter* or Gentlemanly Learning, if he have the Art of making his *Compliments* and *Address* to a Person of *Quality*, if he can accept of a *Presentation* from a *Parron*, and be a fit *Tool* to carry on the Measures of the ruling Party of the Church, *that is the Man* that shall find *Encouragement* in our *Assemblies* and *Commissions*, tho' he know not how to speak a *Word* 'in Season to a weary Soul'. No Regard is had to a Man's Acquaintance with experimental Religion, and the Power of Godliness upon his own Soul, according to the Acts of the Church in former Times: But, on the contrary, if there be a Man who has an Air of Piety and Religion, however well polished by the Lord for edifying the *Body of Christ*, and for overthrowing the *Works of the Devil*, for which Purpose the Son of God was manifested; the prevailing Party have an evil Eye of Jealousy upon that Man, as a Person of dangerous and divisive Principles: And, if a clear Gospel-Call to such a Man offer from the Body of a Christian People, he must be set aside, and the Hue and Cry raised against him, as tho' an Enemy were coming into our Borders. By these and the like Methods of

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Management, it looks as if a faithful Ministry, in a few Years, shall be gradually wormed out of Scotland, and our Posterity left without the Knowledge of the Gospel, and a covenanted Work of Reformation buried in perpetual Oblivion.

We proceed now to the *Third Branch* of the general Charge against the prevailing Party in the Judicatories of this Church, viz. *That sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Ministerial Communion are imposed, by restraining Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against the present Course of Defection and Backsliding; and that in this, as well as in the former Things charged against them, they counteract the solemn Engagements they came under at their Ordination to the Ministry.*

The Truth of this will be evident, if it is considered, That the last Assembly have made it a Term of Ministerial Communion, that Ministers shall not from the Pulpit testify against the Act of Assembly 1732, or any other Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church; in as much as they did approve of, and ratify the Sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, finding Mr. Erskine censurable for testifying against the said Act, and other Defections of this Church, in his Sermon at the Opening of the said Synod October 1732; and did rebuke and admonish him accordingly at the Bar of the said Assembly. From which it evidently appears, that it was the Judgment of that Assembly, That no Minister of our Communion ought to testify from the Pulpit against the Act of Assembly 1732, or any other sinful and unwarrantable Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church, unless he resolves to become obnoxious to Cen-  
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sure. It cannot be justly alledged, that it was *merely* for the *indecent* expressing of Things which might be otherwise lawfully said, that the Rebuke was tendered; in regard the *Assembly approved the Proceedings* of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, finding Mr. *Erskine* *censurable* for several *indecent Expressions* uttered by him, in a Sermon preached before the said Synod, tending to disturb the Peace of this Church, and *impugning several Acts of Assembly and Proceedings of the Church-judicatories*, as the said *Assembly* represent the Matter in their *Act and Sentence* pass'd against him. By which it is plain, that the Thing which was reckoned *indecent* in Mr. *Erskine*, was his *impugning*, from the Pulpit, the *Acts of Assembly* and the *Proceedings of Church-judicatories*: This was the great Quarrel the Synod had against him; and the Assembly do, upon this very Ground, approve of the Synod's Proceedings, as their *Act and Sentence* bears: Therefore it was for saying such and such Things, that the *Censure* was administred, and not *merely* for the *Way and Manner* of emitting them. From whence it still follows, as was said, That the *last Assembly* have established it as a *Term of Ministerial Communion*, that no Minister shall, upon any Occasion, testify from the Pulpit against any *Act of Assembly* be it never so sinful, or against any of the *Proceedings of the Judicatories* be they never so unwarrantable.

This limiting of Ministerial Freedom is unreasonable in its own Nature, and inconsistent with Faithfulness in the Exercise of the Ministry. There is nothing more plain, than that every Minister is bound to declare the whole Counsel of God: As he is to teach the Observance of all Things contained

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*in the Word*; so, he is to *shew Israel their Transgression, and the House of Jacob their Sin*; and, if the Sin be committed by the *Officers of the Church*, it is so much the more *dangerous* to the whole Body, and therefore ought to be testified against, because that, when *the Leaders of the People do cause them to err, they that are led of them are destroyed*, Isa. ix. 16. And this is so much the more reasonable, when the *Judicatories of a Church*, by their Practices and Statutes, are making visible Encroachments upon the Privileges of the Members thereof, because the *publick Regreting* of these unwarrantable Practices and Laws has a native Tendency to excite all that are serious and godly to the Exercise of fervent *Prayer and Supplication to the Lord*, who has the Hearts of all Men in his Hands, that he would, in his own Time and Way, bring about their Relief from these Grievances under which they grope: And this lamenting of, and testifying against the Defections of this Church, has been the Practice of the *Prophets* under the *Old*, and of our *Lord* himself and his *Apostles* under the *New Testament*, Mat. v. vi. vii. Chap. Mat. xxiii. 13. to the End of the Chapter, *Stephen* and *Peter* when before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, Acts vii. 51, 52, 53. Acts iv. 10, 11. see also Acts x. 11. and Acts ii. 23. Nor indeed can a Minister be faithful to his Trust, if he can be a *silent Spectator* of the threatned Ruin of the Church of which he is a Member; for it is the Duty of every faithful *Watchman* to give Warning of approaching Hazard, upon his Peril, Ezek. iii. 17, 18. And this was so far from being thought *culpable by this Church*, that her former *Assemblies* have strictly enjoined every Minister, in an Agreeableness to this Charge from the Lord, to *reprove the Sins*, and to *press the Du-*

*ties of the Times*, as they would not expose themselves to the Censures of the Church, even the Length of Suspension and Deposition, Ass. 1647. Sess. 19. and Act of Ass. 1648. Sess. 26. intituled, *Act for censuring Ministers for their Silence, and not speaking of the Corruptions of the Times*. From which it still more evidently appears, that the injoining of Silence as to publick Defections, is a *new* Term of Ministerial Communion in this Church.

And we must also add, That we reckon this *Silence*, injoined us and other Ministers, *inconsistent with our Ordination Vows and Engagements*, by which we are bound to assert, maintain and defend the Doctrine, Worship, Presbyterian Government and Discipline of this Church: For, how can we be faithful to our Ordination Vows and Engagements, and yet be *silent Spectators* of the deep Wound that is given to our Presbyterian Constitution, not only by the Act of Assembly 1732, but by all the other above-mentioned Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church? Shall we be Witnesses to the Measures that are taken, and which have a direct Tendency to corrupt the Doctrine of this Church, and yet be *restrained* from *lamenting* the same, upon proper Occasions, from the Pulpit? Shall we tamely yield to a *Censure*, shutting our Mouths, when the Heritage of God is oppressed, and the Cry of Violence is going up to Heaven from the several Corners of this Church and Land, and especially when Representations and Instructions to our General Assemblies are nowise regarded? If we suffer ourselves to be bound up from regretting, on *proper Occasions*, the unwarrantable and sinful Proceedings of this *declining Church*, How can we answer for it to our

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*Lord and Master, to our own Consciences, to succeeding Generations, and to the Flock over which we are set as Watchmen? And to conclude this Head, As all the Ministers of this Church, when they are ordained to their Office, do solemnly promise and engage, and subscribe it with their Hands, That they shall, to the utmost of their Power, in their Station, assert, maintain and defend the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith, and our Presbyterian Church Government and Discipline; and that they shall never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the Prejudice or Subversion of the same; Can the prevailing Party have the Assurance to affirm, or, if they should affirm it, will any that are not blinded with Prejudice, or under a powerful Bias, believe that the above particular Instances, which we have condescended upon to make good the Charge laid against them, have neither a direct nor indirect Tendency to the Prejudice and Subversion of the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith, or of our Presbyterian Church Government and Discipline?*

*The Fourth Thing contained in our general Charge is, That these corrupt Courses are carried on with a high Hand, notwithstanding that the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them, and to stop the Current of the present Defection.*

It is what cannot be refused, that, for many Years bypast, the above-mentioned arbitrary Steps, that are so plainly levelled against our Presbyterian Constitution, have been complained of by Representations and Instructions from Synods and Presbyteries, to our several General Assemblies; And also the threatening Signs that we are under of

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Corruption in Doctrine, and of Innovations both in the Method and Strain of Preaching, have been freely represented: There has been a loud Cry from *Presbyteries* and *Synods* in different Corners of this Church and Land, that *Justice might be done to injured Truth*; But, how are these Representations and Instructions treated? They are once read in a *Committee of Instructions*, but no more regarded. And, when *Presbyteries* did instruct their Commissioners to the two or three last preceding Assemblies, That, if the Committees should not transmit their *mournful Complaints* to the General Assembly, they should, as they would be answerable to their Constituents, bring them in to open Assembly; yet, when this is done, they are born down by superior Numbers: They are told, The Assembly's Time is over, or that the Assembly has no Time to enter upon the Consideration of these Things. The last Assembly found Time to intrude Ministers into the Parishes of Stow and Kingoldrum, and to pass severe and unjust Sentences against some Ministers in the Presbytery of Dunfermline, and the Four protesting Brethren, but had no Time to consider the weighty Grievances that the Flock of Christ are groaning under; we must say it with Regret, They found Time to oppress them more and more, but not to help or relieve them. As Representations and Instructions have been frequently sent from Synods and Presbyteries concerning the above lamentable Course; so a Representation and Petition, sign'd by above Forty Ministers and some Elders, (with whom we did concur) was given in to the Assembly 1732, concerning most of the above-mentioned Grievances; but the Assembly's Committee of Bills refused to transmit the same: And, when we offered our

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*Representation at the Assembly's Bar, we were refused a Hearing ; which obliged us to enter our Protestation, as Ministers and Members of this Church, for our just Rights and Privileges so manifestly encroached upon. Representations and Instructions to our several Assemblies are the Means that the prevailing Party own should be used ; but, how long have they been tried without Success ? To say we should use them, and yet in the mean Time to disregard and despise them, is a Mocking of the Ministers and Members of this Church with a Witness. When these and the like Means have been so long tried by Synods, Presbyteries, and some particular Ministers and Members of this Church, but to no Purpose ; and when the Lord has been dealing with us, to reclaim us, both by threatned Judgments, and also by a Series and Train of merciful Providences ; our Condition seems to be the same with that of sinning and backsliding Israel, of whom the Lord complains, *Hos. vii. 1. When I would have healed Israel, then the Iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the Wickedness of Samaria.**

*The last Thing contained in our general Charge is, That Matters are come to such a Pass in this Church, that we are excluded from keeping up a proper Testimony against the Defections and Backslidings of the prevailing Party, in a Way of ministerial Communion with them.*

When Petitions, Representations and Instructions to our several General Assemblies are not regarded, ought we not doctrinally to discover the Evils that prevail amongst us, and lament over them in our several Congregations before the Lord ? Ought we not judicially to protest against the sin-  
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ful Measures that are taken, not only for our own Exoneration, but that a *legal Testimony* against Sin and Defection, and for the Truths of God, may be transmitted to Posterity? And that both these are warrantable, we have already shown. But the *prevailing Party* in our Church-Judicatories, as they do not regard our Representations and Petitions, so they will not allow us to give either a *doctrinal* or a *judicial Testimony* against their Defections and Backslidings: If we testify in a *doctrinal* Way against the same, then, according to the *Act and Sentence* of the *last Assembly*, we must be brought to the Bar of Church-judicatories, and there be *rebuked* and *admonished*; and if we *protest* against such a Censure, so nearly affecting the free and faithful Exercise of our Ministry, or if we *protest* for our just Right and Privilege to testify against the Defections of this Church upon all proper Occasions, then, according to the *foresaid Act and Sentence*, we must be *suspended* from the Exercise of our Ministry: If we cannot yield Obedience to a Sentence of Suspension inflicted in an arbitrary Way and Manner, because of our Testimony in the publick Cause of God, then we must be *cast out of the Church*, we must be *declared no Ministers of the established Church*. From all which it is plain, that the *prevailing Party* will not allow us to maintain a proper Testimony, in a Way of ministerial Communion with them, against their present Steps of Defection and Backsliding; and therefore it is not only *warrantable* for us, but we are laid under a *Necessity*, to lift up a Testimony, in a Way of *Secession* from them, against the present Current of Defection, whereby our Constitution is subverted, our Doctrine is corrupted, and the Heritage and

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Flock of Christ are wounded, scattered and broken; that *we may not partake with them in their Sins*, and may do what in us lies to transmit unto succeeding Generations these valuable Truths that have been handed down to us by the Contendings and Wrestlings of a great Cloud of Witnesses in Scotland since the Dawning of Reformation-light amongst us.

But because our present Situation in Providence with reference to this Church, considered abstractly from the Word, cannot be the Rule of our Duty; therefore we turn our Eyes to the *unerring Rule of the Word of God*, looking toward the great *high Priest of our Profession*, who hath the *Urim and Thummim*, *all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* in his Breast, that he may instruct and teach us in the Way that we should go: And we think and are persuaded that his Voice to us from the Word, is that, *Rom. xvi. 7.* *Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* Where the *Apostle*, under the Conduct of the *Spirit*, characterizes the Disturbers of Christian Society, these that *cause Divisions and Offences contrary unto the Doctrine that we have learned.* We in this Church have *learned* from our Forefathers, in a Consistency with the Word of God, that the *Lord Jesus* is the *Lord, King and Law-giver* unto his Church and People; and that the *Office-Bearers* of his House have no *lordly Power* and *Authority* over the Flock and Heritage of God; that the Right of *electing Ministers* belongs unto the People over whom they are to have Charge; and that *by all Means it is to be avoided, that any Minister should be thrust in upon a Christi-*

*an Congregation* : We have *learned*, that, in the *Kingdom of Christ*, there is no Difference between the *Man with the Gold Ring in gay Clothing*, and the *Man with the vile Raiment and Attire*; that *Bond and Free, Master and Servant are one in Christ* : We have *learned*, that it is unlawful to confer the Rights and Privileges of true Church-members upon them who are *open Enemies* to a covenanted Work of Reformation : We have *learned*, that it is an Iniquity to *strengthen or set up the Right-hands of the Wicked*, or give them Power or Occasion to oppress the Lord's People, either in their civil or sacred Privileges : We have *learned*, that Ministers ought to be free and faithful, in giving Warning against prevailing Corruptions, either in the Practice of Judicatories, Ministers, or private Christians ; and that, instead of being *censured*, they ought to be *encouraged* in so doing : We have *learned*, that a *Banner* should be displayed for Truth, against the rising and prevailing Errors of the Time ; that the *Censures* of the Church, such as Rebukes, Admonitions, Suspensions, and the like, should be inflicted upon *evil Doers* or *erroneous Teachers*, and not upon those who tell the Truth, and are sound in Doctrine and Morals : We have *learned*, that protesting against Defections in an Assembly of Church, is lawful and warrantable. These and the like Doctrines we have *learned* in this Church. They that *cause Divisions and Offences* are these who either in Principle or Practice counteract or deny them, and who cannot endure them, but who by the Majority of their Numbers, having got the Key of Discipline in their Hands, study with all their Might to smother and bury them and the like Doctrines, by Rebukes, Admonitions



ons, Suspensions, and higher Censures. In which Event the Duty pointed out to us by the inspired *Apostle* is twofold: First to *mark them*; the Word signifies to *observe* them, as a Watchman set upon a high Tower, in order to descry the Enemy that comes in to invade and disturb the City of God; 'He is diligently to *mark* all Comers, and to give Notice accordingly for the Safety of the City.' (as the Continuator of *Pool* upon the Place expresses it) And this is what we judge to be our Duty, as we are Watchmen set upon the Walls of the City of God. The second Duty incumbent upon us, by the Direction of the *Holy Ghost*, is, to *avoid* them, or, as it reads in the Margin, *turn aside* from them. The Sum is, according to *Expositors*, That sound Christians should turn away from them, and shun their Society, that they may be ashamed: And this we judge warrants us in our Secession from ministerial Communion with them, which is the only Way we have now left us to *avoid* them.

The same Duty we find also laid upon us by an express Command, and that with great Solemnity, as we would not counteract the Authority of the King of Zion, 2 Thess. iii. 6. Now we command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which ye have received of us. Expositors tell us, That the Word rendered to *withdraw*, alludes to a Mariner that steers his Ship from the Rocks; and so it implies the Danger of not *withdrawing*, which may be the Reason of the Solemnity of the Command about it: And it is not from a Heathen Man, but a Brother, one that is of the Church; and it is every Brother, whether Rich or Poor, High or Low, who

*walks disorderly, not according to the Traditions received of the Apostles. And whether these Brethren, who are driving on the present Defection, be walking orderly, according to the Rule of God's Word, and the Principles of this Church founded thereupon, we leave it to the World to judge, from the several Particulars above condemned upon. What remains then, but that we should withdraw from them, seeing no other Means, by Instructions, Petitions, Representations, and Protestations, will stop them in their Career of Backsliding?*

The same Precept we have repeated, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Tit. iii. 10. 2d Ep. of John Verse 10. and many other Places of Scripture which we might adduce. When a Church declines the pure Ways of the Lord, it is the Duty of them that would be found faithful, to *stand and ask for the old Paths, where the good Way is, and to walk therein*, Jerem. vi. 16. And when they change from the good Ways of the Lord to Ways of their own devising, that have no Foundation in the Word, none is obliged to walk with them, Prov. xxiv. 2. When they *say a Confederacy* with the avowed Enemies of the Cause of Christ, so far especially as to make a Complement of the Rights of the Church, and Liberties of the Kingdom of Christ unto them; in that Case we must not *say a Confederacy* with them, but must *stand fast in the Liberties wherewith Christ hath made his People free*, Gal. v. 1. When Truth is wounded in the Streets, and Men censured for publishing it, as tho' it were Lies or Error, in that Case we are to *contend earnestly*, or as in an *Agony, for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, Jude, 3 Verse; Rev. iii. 11. Jer. xv. 19. From all

all which we judge, that this Step of forbearing Ministerial Communion with the prevailing Party in this establish'd Church, in our present Situation, is abundantly warranted.

Having thus considered our present Situation in the adorable Providence of God, and the *Warrant* we have for our present Practice from the unerring Rule of the *Word*, we cannot but upon the whole declare, That seeing the *prevailing Party* in the established Church are *breaking down* the necessary Fences and Guards upon our Doctrine, Worship, Government, and Discipline; seeing they *exercise a legislative Power* and Authority over the House of God, by enacting Laws *inconsistent* with the *Laws of Christ*, to the Hurt and not the Edification of his Body; seeing the *prevailing Party* by the Act 1732, and commonly in all the Settlements of Christian Congregations, *join themselves* to the *avowed Enemies* of a Presbyterian Interest, who are suppressing the true Friends thereof; seeing a lordly and magisterial Power is exercised over the Flock of Christ, which he *gathers with his Arm*, and *carries* with the greatest Tenderness in *his Bosom*, by inflicting the highest Censures of the Church upon the People of these Congregations, who cannot submit to the Ministry of such as are intruded upon them, and by threatening to inflict the highest Censures upon Ministers who dispense sealing Ordinances unto them; seeing Church-discipline is exercised after this Manner, so as to screen such as are justly censurable, and to *censure Men* for the *faithful Discharge of their Duty*; and seeing Prelatick Dominion and Tyranny has crept in, and is carried on, by divesting Presbyteries of their inherent Right and Privilege, if they



they cannot concur in the violent Settlement of Congregations, and Committees are appointed with a Presbyterial Power to intrude Ministers upon *dissenting* and *reclaiming* Congregations, and Presbyteries are appointed to receive and intrude such intruded Ministers amongst their Members, by all which Proceedings our Presbyterian Constitution is subverted; seeing also the *prevailing* Party, instead of *contending for the Faith* once delivered to the Saints, or the Purity of Doctrine, suffer Error to be published without any Notice taken thereof; seeing no due and adequate Censure has been inflicted upon erroneous Teachers, yea, seeing such are held and kept in ministerial Communion with the established Church; seeing the *prevailing* Party have altered the Terms of ministerial Communion, by making every Man liable to Censure, who adventures to preach against their present Defections; seeing they have cast out Thousands from Communion with the Church in her sealing Ordinances, who cannot join with *intruded* Hirelings; and seeing these who are intruded into the Ministry, and who are very active in carrying on the present Defections, tho' in the mean Time they have no lawful Call to act as Ministers of this Church, make such a *considerable* Part of her Judicatories; and seeing, to crown all, the *Assemblies* of this Church are become so *arbitrary* in their Proceedings of late, as to have no Regard to Instructions, Petitions, and Representations against a Course of Defection, but *ex contra* do commence Processes, do rebuke, admonish, suspend, and threaten higher Censures upon Ministers who *preach* and *protest* against the above Defections; and since Ministers are not only *suspended*, but *cast out* from ministerial Com-

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munions by the *prevailing Party* in the established Church, merely for protesting for their just Rights and Privileges to testify against these and the like Defections, and because they refuse to retract their said Protestations, or submit to a mere authoritative Suspension for their Testimony in a Cause of publick Concern: We do then upon the whole conceive, that altho' we have hitherto continued contending and wrestling in a Way of Church-communion with our Brethren, yet now, finding that there is no Stop put to the backsliding Measures, and that the Current of Defection runs with such an impetuous Torrent, and that we are excluded from keeping up a Testimony against their many sinful and unwarrantable Proceedings in a Way of Church-communion with them; therefore we judge it our Duty to make a *Secession* from ministerial Communion with the present prevailing Party in the established Church, till they are sensible of their above-mentioned Sins and Mistakes, and reform and amend the same.

But, notwithstanding of this our present *Secession* from the *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of this Church, yet we hereby declare, as our Protestation bears, That we are willing to 'hold Communion with all such as desire with us to adhere unto the Principles of the true Presbyterian covenanted Church of Scotland, in her Doctrine, Discipline, Worship, and Government; and particularly with every one who are groaning under these Evils, and affected with these Grievances that we have been complaining of, and who are in their several Spheres wrestling against the same;' and we hope that there is a goodly Number of such in the several Corners of this Church."

We

We make no Doubt but the odious Charge of *Schism* will be laid against us, especially by such as are carrying on this lamentable Course of Defection. This present Breach began first on *their Side*, and not upon ours; in so far as the *Synod of Perth and Stirling* condemned several Truths emitted by Mr. *Erskine* in his Synodical Sermon, and appointed him to be rebuked at their Bar for the faithful Discharge of his Duty; and the late *General Assembly* appointed us every one to be *suspended*, and that because we *protested* for our just Right and Privilege to testify, on all proper Occasions, against the Sins and Defections of this Church; and, in case we should not obey the Sentence of Suspension, a *Censure* of a *higher Nature* was appointed to be inflicted upon us: And the *Commission* having, at their Meeting *August* last, execute the said Sentence of *Suspension*, as we did *protest* both before and after the Execution of the same, that it should be *held and reputed null and void*; and that it should be *lawful for us* to exercise our *Ministry* as formerly we had done, and as if no such *Censure* had been past; in regard we were not convicted of any Thing, in *Doctrine or Practice*, contrary to the received Principles of this Church, or our *Ordination Vows and Engagements*; so we did accordingly exercise our *Ministry* notwithstanding of the said Sentence, and could not submit to a Sentence by mere *Church-authority*, and, because of our Testimony in the publick Cause of God, discharging us to exercise that *Ministry* which we have received from the Lord: And therefore the *Commission* of the *General Assembly* did, at their Meeting *November* last, declare us to be *no longer Ministers of the established Church*. Thus we have continued contend-

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ding and wrestling against the present Defections and Backslidings in a Way of Church-Communion, till the *prevailing Party* have thrust us out from among them; therefore the Charge of *Schism* cannot be justly laid at our Door. But besides, when the Nature of *Schism* is particularly considered, we hope it will be evident unto all who are unprejudiced, that we cannot be justly charged with the same. *Schism* is a *causeless Separation* from a Church, well constitute, sound in Doctrine, pure in Worship, impartial in Discipline, and acting in the Government according to the Laws of Christ: Otherwise a peaceable Departure from, or leaving the Communion of a Church when there is *just Cause* for it, is not a *Schism*; for *Schism* must needs be theirs, whose the Cause of it is; and the *Wo* runs against these that give the Offence, not against these who are offended at Backslidings. Now, that our present Forbearance of Ministerial Communion with the *prevailing Party* in this established Church, is not *causeless*, will be pretty evident to any who impartially consider what is already said. *Schism*, in this *organised and covenanted Church*, is a *Departure* from that Order and Unity in the Lord, to which we in this Land are so solemnly bound and engaged; and therefore the Charge of *Schism* turns against those who are *renting and breaking through* the said *covenanted Order and Unity*, by destroying instead of edifying the Body of Christ, by scattering the Lord's Flock instead of gathering them, by pulling down the *carved Work* of Reformation instead of building it up, and by restraining Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against prevailing Corruptions, instead of encouraging it.

But now, because we know, that, notwithstanding of all that is said above, we shall still be branded with the odious Name of Men of *erroneous* and *unsound Principles*, particularly by those against whom this our *Testimony* doth point: Therefore we judge it expedient to make the following *Confession* and *Declaration* of our *Principles* before the World;

1<sup>st</sup>, We own the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only Rule of Faith and Manners; as also, we own the Protestant reformed Doctrine, according to the same, publickly professed in the Church of *Scotland*, summarily contained in our *Confession of Faith*, *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, approven by the Assembly 1647; in Opposition to *Poper*y, *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Arminianism*, *Quakerism*, *Libertinism*, *Antinomianism*, *Baxterianism*, *Burignianism*, and all other Errors contrary to the foresaid Doctrine, and inconsistent therewith.

2<sup>dly</sup>, We declare our sincere and hearty Adherence to the Form of *Worship* received and practised in the Church of *Scotland*, approven and in-joined in the Acts of the General Assemblies thereof, held forth in the *Directory* for Worship; and condemn and reject whatever is not according to the same.

3<sup>dly</sup>, We believe with our Hearts, and confess with our Mouths, That our Lord Jesus Christ, as he is the alone Head and King of his Church, so he hath appointed a *particular* Form of Government therein, to continue to the End of the World unalterable; and we do receive and embrace *Presbyterian Church-Government*, by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies, as that Form of Government which we judge to be agreeable to and

and founded upon the Word, of God as describ'd in our *Books of Discipline*, and the *Propositions* concerning Church-Government, received and approved by the Ass. 1645. Sess. 16. And we hereby condemn all *Sectarian* Errors whatsoever, contrary unto, or inconsistent with, the foresaid Government, instituted and appointed by the Lord Jesus in his House.

4thly, We believe, That the visible Church, which is also Catholick and Universal under the Gospel, consists of all these through the World that profess the true Religion, and of their Children, and is the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and House and Family of God, unto which Christ hath given the Ministry, Oracles and Ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting the Saints in this Life to the End of the World.

5thly, After that the Lord was graciously pleased by the Spirit of his Mouth, and the Brightness of his Coming in a Gospel-Dispensation, to scatter the Clouds of Antichristian Darkness that had covered this whole Land; Our Fathers did according to Scripture Warrant and Example, by solemn Covenant, bind and engage both themselves and their Posterity, to cleave and adhere unto the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Lord's House; and to join with their Profession of the Gospel, such a Life and Conversation as becometh Christians; whereby this whole Nation was devoted to the Lord. We therefore believe, and confess the perpetual Obligation of the *National Covenant*, frequently sworn by all Ranks of Persons in *Scotland*; as also the perpetual Obligation of the *Solemn League and Covenant*, sworn in the Year 1643, for maintaining and carrying on a Work of Reformation in the Three Nations, and



renewed afterwards in *Scotland* in the Year 1648, with a solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Breaches of the said Covenant, and a solemn Engagement to the Duties contain'd therein; which Oaths and Covenants, we believe to be inviolable in their Obligation upon this and all succeeding Generations.

6thly, We believe, That Christ hath appointed Church-Officers under him, distinct from the Civil Magistrate; and that to these Officers the Keys of the *Kingdom of Heaven* are committed; the *Key of Doctrine*, for opening the Mysteries of the Gospel, and wonderful Things of his *Law*; the *Key of Discipline and Government*, for the Preservation of the Beauty, Order and Purity of his *Church*, and for purging out of her, Errors in Principle, or Scandals in Practice, whereby she is in Danger of being corrupted.

7thly, As these Ministers and Officers in the *Kingdom of Christ* are in their Teaching bounded unto the Doctrine of the Word, or Faith delivered to the Saints; so in their Government of the Church they are limited to that System of Laws, and that Form and Mould of Government he hath delivered, which are every Way complete, without altering the Land-marks of his Kingdom, or imposing upon his Church the Commandments of Men, which is an Invading of his Prerogative as the alone *King and Lawgiver of Zion*: And therefore we believe, that the Decrees and Determinations of all Councils, made up of fallible Men, are no further to be received or submitted to by the Church, than in so far as they are consonant unto the Word of God.

8thly, We believe, That, when the Plurality of Officers in any particular Church under the

New

New Testament do make Defection from the Purity of Doctrine, Worship or Government, attain'd to ; to the Preservation and Maintenance of which they and the whole Land are bound by the *Oath of God* ; and when, notwithstanding of these *Oaths*, they do practically combine to overthrow the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the *House of God*, by countenancing and supporting of Error or erroneous Teachers, by subverting the Constitution, by depriving the true Members of the Church of their Rights, and conferring them upon the open Enemies of a Work of Reformation, whom they take into their Bosom, to the sadning of the Hearts of the Godly, and to the strengthening of the Hands of evil Doers ; and when, notwithstanding of Remonstrances, Testimonies and Protestations, they not only go on obstinately in their arbitrary Methods, but proceed to inflict the Censures of the Church upon these who, in any of the foresaid Ways, testify against their Measures : Then, and in that Case, we believe it lawful for the lesser Part of Church-Officers, who are holding the Head, and keeping the Foundation of Government, to manage the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, in an Agreeableness to the *Laws of Christ*, and for the Benefit of his *Mystical Body* ; and, in so doing, they have more Ground to look for the promised Presence of *Christ* with them tho' their Number be small, than the Majority who are proceeding as above, *Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*

gibly, We believe, That it appertains unto every several Congregation to elect their own Ministers and Officers ; and that altogether it is to be avoided, that any Man be violently intruded or thrust in upon any Congregation ; and that this Liberty should

should with all Care be reserved to every several Congregation, to have their Ministers settled among them with their own Call and Consent; And consequently, that the Act 1732, restricting the Power of the Election of Ministers to Heritors and Elders without Consent of the People, and giving an equal Power of Election to non-residing Heritors, and even to those that are not of our Communion, is a dangerous Innovation upon the Rights of the Church, and the Principles of the Reformation, which, since that happy Period, this Church hath been all along contending for; and that the said Act is contrary unto the Word of God, which gives the Right of electing Officers to Christian Congregations, without Difference between Rich and Poor.

10thly, We believe, That it is the Duty of faithful Ministers, when Defections prevail in a Church, and when Iniquity is established by a Law, to give faithful Warning against the prevailing Evils of the Time: And when censured for it, tho' at the Bar of an Assembly, it is their Duty to protest for the Cause of Truth, that it may not fall in the Streets; and, when suspended or otherwise censured, that it is their Duty to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry, Necessity being laid upon them by their Dedication to that Office, and the Command of God, to preach the Gospel, and so to obey God rather than Man; especially when it is considered, that Submission to arbitrary Authority, in a Case wherein the publick Cause is concerned, is a plain giving-up with their Testimony.

Having now declared our Adherence to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the *Church of Scotland*; and having laid open the Grounds and Reasons of our Secession from the



the present *prevailing Party* in the Judicatories of this Church: As we desire to be humbled before the Lord for the manifold abounding Sins, and the great Degeneracy of the Age wherein we live; and particularly for all the Evils above-mentioned, for which a *Righteous and Holy God* may justly forsake and cast off this Church and Land; especially when it is considered to what a great Height our Contempt of the *Gospel of Christ*, and of *Christ* himself the great Substance of the Gospel, is come, together with our Impenitency under all our heinous Sins and Abominations: So we likewise warn all and every one, and particularly the *People* of our *respective Congregations*, seriously to consider these Things, to be humbled for them, and to turn to the Lord with Weeping and Supplication, that the fierce Anger of the Lord may be turned away from us, and that he may be graciously pleased to return unto us, and may heal our Backslidings and Breaches, that *Glory may yet dwell in our Land*: Yea, under our abounding Sins, and the manifold Evidences of the Lord's Anger, his Voice unto us seems to be, *Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O Nation not desired: Before the Decree bring forth, before the Day pass as the Chaff, before the fierce Anger of the Lord come upon you, before the Day of the Lord's Anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye Meek of the Earth, which have wrought his Judgment; seek Righteousness, seek Meekness: It may be, ye shall be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger, Zeph. ii. 1, 2, 3.*

SECT.

## S E C T. III.

*Reasons by the protesting Ministers for the Validity of their Pastoral Relation to their respective Congregations.*

**T**HE Commission of the General Assembly, by their Act and Sentence past against us, *Loose our pastoral Relation to our respective Parishes, and declare our Churches vacant from and after the Date of their Sentence.* And our Protestation, entred at the intimating of the above Sentence unto us, bears, That, notwithstanding of this Sentence past against us, *our pastoral Relation shall be held and repuse firm and valid;* And in our said Protestation we declare our Adherence to the Protestation formerly entred before this Court at their Meeting in *August*: And, because that Protestation contains some weighty Reasons for the Nullity of any Sentence affecting our Ministerial Office, or the Exercise of it amongst the People of our respect Charges; we shall insert it here, tho' it is already published in our several *Representations* given in at that Time to the *Commission*; And it is as follows,

And further, We are obliged to protest, likeas  
 by these Presents we do protest for ourselves, and  
 in Name of all the *Ministers and Members* of  
 this Church adhering to us, as also in the Name  
 of all and every one in our *respective Congrega-*  
*tions* who shall adhere unto us, against any Cen-  
 sure that may be inflicted upon us, affecting our  
 Ministerial Office, or the Exercise thereof, as null  
 and void in itself; and that it shall be lawful and

war-

warrantable for us to exercise our Ministry as hitherto we have done, and as if no such Censure had been inflicted upon us; in regard we are not convicted of departing from any of the received Principles of this Church, or of counteracting our Ordination Vows and Engagements: But, on the contrary, are sentenced to Censure by the late General Assembly, for protesting against a Decision, whereby Injury is done to some Truths of God which we are obliged to own and confess, and whereby we are brought under these new and unwarrantable Terms of ministerial Communion above-mentioned, which we look upon as inconsistent with the Word of God, and our Ordination Vows and Engagements; As also, for all the above Reasons and Causes, why we cannot retract our Paper given in to the late General Assembly. And further, we do protest, That, if in Consequence of any Censure inflicted upon us, whether of Suspension or of a higher Nature, any Minister or Probationer shall exercise any Part of our Ministerial Work in our respective Congregations, the same shall be held and reputed as an Intrusion upon our Ministerial Labours: As also, we protest, That if any other Minister shall be settled in our Congregations, that the same shall be held and reputed as an Intrusion upon our pastoral Charges; and that the People of our respective Congregations shall not be obliged to own, acknowledge or submit unto such as their lawful Pastors; seeing we were ordain'd to take the Oversight of them with their own Call and Consent, and with Consent of the Presbytery into which we were received, and have not been convicted of receding from our Ordination Vows and Engagements:



In Consequence of the above Protestation, we have continued to exercise our Ministry amongst the People of our respective Charges; and we judge it our Duty so to do, because, as our said Protestation bears, we were ordain'd to take the Oversight of them with *their own Call and Consent*, and with the *Consent* of the *Presbytery* into which we were received, and *have not been convicted of departing from any of the received Principles of this Church, or of counteracting our Ordination Vows and Engagements*. That we were ordained to take the Oversight of our respective Congregations with their own Call and Consent, and with the Consent of our several Presbyteries, is what cannot be controverted: And we affirm, that our pastoral Relation cannot be loos'd by any of the Judicatories of the Church, unless by Transportation to another Congregation, but this is not our Case; or by some legal Evidence or Document that we have departed in Doctrine or Practice from the received Principles of this Church, or that we have counteracted our Ordination Vows and Engagements, but none of these take Place here: And therefore our pastoral Relation to our respective Parishes must subsist, and be still held and reputed firm and valid, as will appear from the following Particulars;

1<sup>st</sup>, There is no Document or Evidence brought against us, that we have departed either in Doctrine or Practice from the received Principles of this Church; this was never laid to our Charge: For the Truth of what we affirm, we appeal to the *Process* itself, and to the *Sentence* that was pass'd against us, where no such Thing is laid to our Charge; besides, we have with great Solemnity declared, in our several Representations given  
in

in to the Commission, our Adherence to all the Principles of the Church of *Scotland*, as they are laid down in our *Confession of Faith*, our *Directory for Worship*, and in the *Form of Church-Government* received and approved by this Church. What Principle then of the Church have we departed from? Let our Managers show it, if they can. Their Sentence, as it stands connected with the Act that the last General Assembly pass'd against us, is founded upon our Protestation against a Decision of that Assembly, and on our Refusal to retract the same, together with our Non-submission to a Sentence of Suspension pass'd and execute against us: But we ask our Managers, Is it a Principle of this Church, That in no Case the Ministers and Members thereof may protest against an Act or Sentence of a General Assembly? We are sure, this is so far from being a Principle of the Church of *Scotland*, that it is contrary to our Reformation and Protestant Principles; this is to set up an absolute Power and Authority in the supreme Judicatory of the Church, to which all ought to submit without Gainsaying or Counteracting, which is the very Thing the Pope of *Rome* pleads for, unto the enslaving of the Consciences of Men, by requiring a blind Subjection and Obedience to his Dictates, without examining the same according to the Word of God: Yea, such a Principle as this would open the Flood-gates of Defection from our Reformation-Principles, and would effectually wrest out of our Hands a proper Mean for the Exoneration of our own Consciences, and for transmitting to Posterity a Testimony for Truth, and against the Sins and Defections of a backsliding Church.

2dly, We are not convicted of counteracting

our Ordination Vows and Engagements ; neither is this so much as alledged in the Sentence pass'd against us: Yea, our Conduct for which we are condemned is most agreeable to the Engagements we came under when we were ordained to the Office of the Ministry ; in regard we have promised and engaged, never to endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the Prejudice or Subversion of our Presbyterian Church-Government and Discipline ; and that, to the utmost of our Power, we shall in our several Stations assert, maintain and defend the same. And when it was evident to us, that by the Act of Assembly 1732, and by the present Proceedings of Church-judicatories in the violent Settlement of Congregations, a deep Wound is given unto our Presbyterian Constitution, and that by the Decision of the last Assembly the Mouths of Ministers are shut from testifying against these or the like Evils, as we have already made evident ; we could not but reckon that we were obliged by our Ordination Vows and Engagements to protest for our just Privilege and Duty to testify against the Act of Assembly 1732, or the like Defections, upon all proper Occasions.

3dly, It is the Command of the Head and King of the Church unto us in his own Word, that we should *take heed unto ourselves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made us Overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2. And that we should *take heed to the Ministry which we have received in the Lord, to fulfil it*, Col. iv. 17. This is what we have solemnly promised and engaged unto, when we were set over our respective Congregations: And since



we are not convicted of any Thing in Doctrine or Practice contrary to the received Principles of this Church, or our Ordination Vows and Engagements ; we cannot but look upon this singular and uncommon Censure, loosning our Relation to our particular Congregations, as a Censure that has no Foundation in the Word of God, or in the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland* agreeable thereto : And therefore in this Case we must judge it our Duty to obey God rather than Man ; and to regard the Command of God in his Word, more than the Act or Sentence of any Synod or Council whatsoever ; and to endeavour, according to the Measure of the Grace of God given unto us, to fulfil our Ministry amongst the People committed to our Charge.

*4thly*, From the above Particulars it is evident, that if any Minister or Probationer shall exercise any Part of our ministerial Work in our respective Congregations, or if any other Minister shall be settled in our laid Congregations, the same shall be held and repute an Intrusion upon our ministerial Labours and pastoral Charges ; as also, that the People of our several Congregations shall not be obliged to own, acknowledge, or submit unto such as their lawful Pastors ; yea, if they submit to the Ministry of any who in Consequence of the Sentence pass'd against us exercise any Part of our ministerial Work, they counteract what they have solemnly promised and engaged, in regard that the Calls they have given unto us bear a solemn Promise and Engagement, ' To give due Respect to our Persons as Ministers of Christ, and Obedience and Submission to our Ministry in the Lord, and to do what they can to strengthen our Hands, and encourage us in this great Work,

as

as becomes a dutiful People to their lawful Pastors.

If it is alledged, That the People ought to submit to the publick Judgment of the Church; We answer, They ought not to give a blind and implicit Obedience to any Church whatsoever, and that they ought to examine the Sentences of all Synods and Councils by the *Word of God*. The *Bereans* are commended, *Acts* xvii. 11. for examining the Doctrine of the great Apostle *Paul* by the *Word*, and his Authority as an *Apostle* was superior to that of any fallible Synod or Council. Let the *Word of God*, and the *Principles* of this Church agreeable thereto, be Judge betwixt the prevailing Party and us: We appeal to their own Sentence pass'd against us, wherein nothing is laid to our Charge contrary to the *Word of God*, or the received Principles of the Church of Scotland; and it is allowed by all Casuists, that, if the true Pastors of the Church are by mere human Authority cast out, and others intruded in their Stead, that it is the Duty of the People to own their Relation to their true Pastors, and to refuse Subjection to such as are thrust in upon them in their Room. To conclude this Head, Can we from Scripture or from the Constitution and Principles of this Church, or can we be answerable to our Ordination Vows and Engagements, if we should, in Obedience to the arbitrary Will and Command of Men, flee from our Flocks, and leave them to be dispersed, scattered and broken? Will it be a sufficient Apology for us to say, That the Assembly or their Commission have discharged us to exercise our Ministry amongst them, when the chief Shepherd of the Sheep has commanded us to *take heed to the Flock over which we are made Overseers*, and to

feed

feed them? Or, will it be a *Salvo* for us in this Case, that our Subjection strengthens and supports *Church-authority*, when that Authority, not only in this Particular, but in many other Instances, is abused at this Day to the Prejudice and Oppression of the Heritage of God, being exercised in a Way opposite to the Word of God, and subversive of our Constitution? Therefore we judge it our Duty to exercise our Ministry amongst the People of our respective Congregations, notwithstanding of the above Sentence pass'd against us, as formerly we have done: And, for the Reasons that we have now given, we cannot but look upon the said Sentence, loosing our pastoral Relation to our several Parishes, as null and void in itself; and consequently, that our pastoral Relation to our said Parishes does subsist, and must be held and repute firm and valid, as if no such Sentence had been pass'd. Likewise we are bold to warn all and every one in our respective Congregations against any that may exercise any Part of our ministerial Work among them, in Consequence of the foresaid Sentence, as Intruders upon our pastoral Work and Charge, whom they ought neither to own nor acknowledge, and to whose Ministry, as lawful Pastors over them, they ought not to submit.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Reasons by the protesting Ministers for their exercising the Keys of Government and Discipline, according to their Protestation entred before the Commission.*

**W**HEN the Commission of the General Assembly did intimate their Sentence unto us, loosing  
our



our pastoral Relation, &c. We did protest, ' That  
 ' it should be lawful and warrantable for us to ex-  
 ' ercise the *Keys* of *Doctrine*, *Discipline* and  
 ' *Government*, according to the *Word* of *God*, our  
 ' *Confession of Faith*, and the Principles and Con-  
 ' stitutions of the *covenanted Church of Scotland*.  
 As this is the last Head of our Protestation, so we  
 shall briefly offer some few Reasons for supporting  
 the same.

1<sup>st</sup>, The *Keys* of *Doctrine*, *Government*, and  
*Discipline*, were given by the *Head* of the *Church*  
 to the *Apostles*, and in them to all the ordinary  
 Ministers of the Gospel, who are Successors unto  
 the *Apostles* in every Thing that was standing  
 and ordinary in their Work and Office, *Matt.*  
*xvi. 19.* and *xviii. 18.* *John xx. 23.* And, as the  
*Key* of *Doctrine* belongs to the pastoral Office,  
 so do the *Keys* of *Government* and *Discipline*.  
 The Command to feed the Church of God, *Acts*  
*xx. 28.* 1 *Pet. v. 2.* is a Command<sup>e</sup> to rule and  
 govern the Flock; the original Word, in both  
 these Places, signifies the Power of *Rule* and *Go-*  
*vernment*, as well as that of Feeding by the Preach-  
 ing of the Word: Only, whereas the Key of  
*Doctrine* may be exercised by every single Pastor,  
 the *Keys* of *Government* and *Discipline* must be  
 exercised by Pastors two or three in Collegio, *Matt.*  
*xviii. 19, 20.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, As the *Keys* of *Government* and *Disci-*  
*pline* are given to the *Ministers* of the *Church*,  
 so there is a special Promise made unto them for  
 their Encouragement in the Exercise of the same,  
*Matt. xviii. 20.* Where two or three are gathered  
 together in my Name, there am I in the Midst  
 of them. It is plain from the Context, that, by  
 this gathering together in Christ's Name, is meant  
 their

their meeting together in a judicative Capacity for the Exercise of the *Keys of Government and Discipline*: And, as the Grant of the *Keys* is made to the Ministers of the Church, so it is here promised unto them, for their Support and Encouragement in their Work and Duty, whatever Difficulties may attend it, that the Lord himself will be in the Midst of them; and we judge, that, when we are constitute in his Name, we have a more especial Claim to the above Promise.

3dly, The prevailing Party in the *establish'd Church* of Scotland having now cast us out from Ministerial Communion with them, we cannot exercise the *Keys* of Government and Discipline any longer in Conjunction with them: Yet, as they themselves must own, that, as we are Ministers of the Church of Christ, we have Power and Authority from the Lord Jesus to exercise the *Key of Doctrine*; so we have the same Warrant and Authority to exercise the *Keys of Government and Discipline in Collegio*.

4thly, As we are in Principle *Presbyterians*, and have promis'd and engaged to adhere to that Form of Government as the only Government instituted and appointed over the House of God by the Lord Jesus in his own Word, and have also profess'd and own'd the same in our several *Representations* given in to the Commission of the General Assembly; so we judge it necessary for us to exercise the *Keys* of Government and Discipline conjunctly, not only for the Benefit of our own Congregations, and for maintaining that Order amongst ourselves which is required by the Word of God, and by the Acts and Constitutions of this Church founded thereupon; but also, that we may distinguish ourselves from these of the *sektarian* and *Independent* Way, who lodge the *Keys* of Government and Discipline in the whole *Community* of the *Faithful* (as they speak) and who refuse the due Subordination of *Congregational Eldership* to the *superior Judicatories*.

5thly, The deplorable Situation of many Congregations in Scotland, groaning under the Weight of Violence and Oppression by the Intrusion of Ministers upon

upon them, and crying for Help and Relief from the present Judicatories of the Church, but finding none, makes it the more necessary for us now, when we are cast out by the prevailing Party from ministerial Communion with them, to associate ourselves together for the Exercise of *Government* and *Discipline*, that so we may be in some Capacity of affording Help and Relief to the distressed and oppressed Heritage of God through the Land, according to the Word of God, and the Rules and Constitutions of the *Church of Scotland*.

Thus we have laid open the Reasons of our Protestation entred before the Commission of the General Assembly *November* last, and have made a free and plain Declaration of our Principles; being constrained in this Day of *Trouble* and *treading down*, and of *Darkness* and *Perplexity* from the Lord God of Hosts in our Valley of *Fisbon*, according to the Measure of Light and Strength which we have received of the Lord, to bear Testimony for the reformed *Doctrine* and *Worship*, *Government* and *Discipline* of the *Church of Scotland*, in Opposition to the many Injuries done thereunto: In all which we have not, so far as we know our own Hearts, designed or desired to provoke any, or to appear singular, but in the Simplicity of our Hearts to discharge our Consciences with respect to our own particular Flocks, and this whole Church and Nation, and to our Posterity when we are gone. And, as it cannot but be affecting to all who have any Regard to the Constitution and Principles of this *Church*, that the present Managers are pursuing such Measures as are so opposite unto our received Principles, and have such a manifest Tendency to subvert our Constitution, and to corrupt our Doctrine; so we sincerely wish that they may consider their Way, and may endeavour to rectify these Evils that have been complained of, and that Reformation-Work may be set on Foot, and carried on, according to the Word of God, our Solemn Covenant-Engagements, and the Acts and Constitutions of the *Church of Scotland*: But, if the prevailing Party will still go on in their present unwarrantable and sinful Measures, carrying on a Course



of Defection from our *Reformed and Covenanted Principles*; however low this Church may be thereby brought, and tho' a Righteous and Holy God may for these Things be provoked in his just and righteous Displeasure to visit us with severe Strokes and Judgments, yet we hope the Lord will in his own good Time raise up a *General Assembly* in the Church of Scotland, that shall condemn the present sinful and unwarrantable Proceedings: And we are encouraged in this Hope and Expectation, when we consider how early the Lord visited this Nation with the Light of the *glorious Gospel*, and what he has done for this Church in her greatest Extremity, how remarkably he has delivered her, and how seasonably he has interposed for her Help and Relief in the Day of her Strait and Distress; so that in *reforming and covenanting Scotland* these and the like Promises have had a signal Accomplishment, *I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession*, Psal. ii. 3. and, *The Isles shall wait for his Law*, Isa. xlii. 4. May He who is the Founder and Foundation of Zion, who builds the Temple of the Lord, and bears all the Glory, appear in his Glory, and build up his Zion amongst us: May he yet arise and have Mercy upon his Church in this Land: May the Time to favour her, even the set Time come, when his Servants shall take Pleasure in her Stones, and favour the Dust thereof: So shall the Heathen fear the Name of the Lord, and all the Kings of the Earth his Glory, Psal. cii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

## F I N I S.

The following Error stands in some Copies, which the Reader is desired to correct with his Pen.

Page 46. Line 15. for Unwarrantableness, read War-rantableness.

IN.

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